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The Sage in Meditation, by Elinor Wylie, on page 602

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Changing Perspectives

THE last decade and a half of American literary history affords an illuminating gloss on the often repeated statement that no age can ever know itself as future generations will see it. Looking back over the literary landscape of the years since 1914 nothing is more noticeable than the dwindling of values in the perspective of time. While the war was in progress an emotional receptivity was set up in the public that transmuted the commonplace into the extraordinary, and an emphasis quite out of proportion to the magnitude of actual literary achievement was frequently placed on the productions of the day. It is amazing in the post-war clarity of judgment to find how little of the permanent adheres, to take a single instance, to those many biographical chronicles from the trenches, which so profoundly moving in their sincerity of feeling and directness of expression, seemed at the time of their writing to embalm for all time an exaltation that must forever be exciting. To-day in the main they are touching rather than stirring, so soon does the flight of time temper intensity of feeling.

Even while the war was on we doubted that the crucible of battle would produce a great novel; now we know that it has not, and indeed are beginning to wonder whether when and if it is written it will not come from one who knows of the Gethsemane through which mankind passed from 1914 to 1918 by hearsay rather than by contact. For if in the long perspective of history distance obliterates the incidental and leaves the important prominent, in the shorter perspective of individual life excrescences here and vivid patches there obscure the view. To judge fairly we must be somewhat removed from events. It is after all emotion recollected in tranquility that produces noble work.

* * *

But we need not go to war alone to discover how emphasis has shifted with the passing of time. There are our realists, "the younger generation," as we dubbed them before a still newer group had shouldered them from their place. With a bitterness bred of the disillusionment of cataclysm they looked upon their world and found it bad. They turned their myopic gaze upon the ills and disaster around them, and seeing nothing but the immediate, called "woe upon the nations." But they, too, further removed in time from the confusion of their youth, have given evidence not only in their expression but in their silence that they have discovered the world to be broader and life to be larger than the immediate and the present. The bitterness, so suddenly injected into American literature, is passing from it not because American life has not as many evils as its most violent assailants thought a few years ago, but because they have been able to see them as part instead of the whole of the landscape of the national life.

And this is of good augury for American literature. For while there is no doubt that no literature can be great that is not born of moral earnestness and sincerity and that does not represent aspiration as well as achievement, it is equally true that mere passion of sympathy, mere resentment against conditions as distinguished from an ardor of hatred that is at once a fever of love for mankind, will not produce great literature. To write profoundly the writer must see clearly, to write movingly he must feel profoundly, and to write so that his works will endure he must hold both thought and emotion in leash to the world that lies without himself as well as to the conviction that drives him on. When he sees the world about him in perspective, and the little passion of his day as part of the great moving flood of human life, then and then only will he lift his work from the plane of the particular to that of the universal and so win for it prospect of immortality.

The Mad Hunter

By GEORGE DILLON

THOSE wings still beating all about
Are but loud ghosts of beauty flown.
Yet my desire keeps cocked to shoot—
What matter the vivid game be gone?

I have a hunger food is gall to—
It starves more sweetly on the thought
Of that light thing I could but call to,
That glimmering image scarcely caught.

What matter if the snowflakes hush the wood,
What matter the solid rifle dust,
What matter the dark come down for good—
Love goes believing, for it must.

This Week

"Decline of the West."
Reviewed by FREDERICK J. TEGGART

"Zola and His Time."
Reviewed by CHRISTIAN GAUSS.

"The Tragic Empress."
Reviewed by FRANK MALOY ANDERSON.

"The Well of Loneliness."
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Selma Lagerlöf's Works.
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This Year . . . Next Year . . . Sometime . . . Never.
By CHARLES A. BENNETT.

"Schubert the Man."
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"Words and Poetry."
Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON.

"Going to Pieces," and "Sawdust and Solitude."
Reviewed by HERSCHEL BRICKELL.

"A Bibliography of Thomas Carlyle's Writings."
Reviewed by WALDO H. DUNN.

The Lessing Bi-Centennial.
By KUNO FRANCKE.

The Wits' Weekly.
Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON.

The Reader's Guide.
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The Compleat Collector.
Conducted by CARL PURINGTON ROLLINS.

The Phoenix Nest.

Next Week, or Later

Three articles on Anglo-American Relations; the first two by *Philip Kerr*, the third by *Walter Lippmann*.

Spengler*

By FREDERICK J. TEGGART
University of California

IN a work, such as that of Spengler, which has succeeded in endowing the results of historical study with literary significance, we must be prepared to exercise discrimination in regard to the different elements of which it is composed. We must, for example, distinguish between the style of the author and the ideas which he introduces for purposes of interpretation. Rousseau's explosive utterances conveyed to his contemporaries the impression that his ideas were new, and readers to-day have similarly mistaken Spengler's self-assurance for originality of thought. Spengler's mode of expression is an inheritance from Nietzsche, and has the convincing qualities of dogmatic enunciation and persistent reiteration. His ideas are an unexpected commingling of world-old analogies and up-to-date conclusions in art, logic, and science, precariously formulated and enveloped in an atmosphere of the portentous. Nevertheless his work does represent an effort which is original, and for that reason demands attention.

The point of departure of "The Decline of the West" is the author's awareness of the fact that the ideas, interpretations, and beliefs we entertain in regard to history have an influence on our religious, political, and personal activities. It is the deep-rooted conviction of Spengler that he has discovered, for the first time, "the true style of history." He is giving, he says, an outlook on history and the philosophy of destiny which is the first of its kind; he is replacing the Ptolemaic system by the Copernican, in the historical field; he is putting before us "one of those truths that have only to be expressed with full clarity to become indisputable." The value of the discovery, in his eyes, is that "to this idea one can refer, and by it one can solve, without straining or forcing, all those separate problems" with which the modern intellect has so vainly busied itself. In the opinion of the author, his contribution represents "the decisive step of sketching an image of history that is independent of the accident of standpoint," that is, of the period in which the observer lives, of his personality, and of the culture or civilization to which he belongs. It goes without saying that, if these statements are even remotely justified by the performance, we have before us one of the most notable of "great books." We must, therefore, be prepared to accord it a serious and deliberate examination.

Spengler's work is one of the many signs of the strong reaction, in our time, against the unitary or unilinear view of history, and the interpretation of this view in terms of the idea of "Progress." In the earlier part of the last century, John Stuart Mill discussed the idea of progress, and argued that, from the reciprocal action of men and circumstance, "there must necessarily result either a cycle or a trajectory," that there must result a movement either in an orbit or following a course not returning into itself. "One or other of these," he said, "must be the type to which human affairs must conform." Spengler rejects the idea of progress, and, as a consequence, falls back automatically upon the alternative of the cycle. In doing so, however, he expresses himself as believing that this choice is a new departure. Mill avoided some such conclusion by reason of the fact that, while he was at work on the "Logic," Michelet had renewed the acquaintance of

* THE DECLINE OF THE WEST. By OSWALD SPENGLER. Vol. II. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1928. $7.50.

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scholars with Vico; he was in error, however, in imagining that Vico was one of the earliest thinkers to adopt the theory of cycles. How far Spengler, when he wrote, had escaped the influence of Croce's revival of Vico, must be left an open question.

The relation between the cyclic and progressive interpretations of history cannot well be understood without some reference to the history of these ideas.

The Greeks were profoundly impressed by the fact that culture differs from country to country and that it undergoes change in the course of time. They endeavored to make these phenomena intelligible by making the assumption that all change follows the pattern of biological growth or development. Now, there is a noteworthy aspect of this form of change, which is, that it will lead to certain results (described as the complete realization of what is implicit in the seed), if nothing interferes. Following the precedent of physiology, the Greeks took it for granted, in the study of man, that culture would go through a determined series of stages of development, if it were not adversely affected by accidents. The endeavor to gain a picture or "idea" of the "natural" course of change in culture made it necessary that they should abstract from history all those "accidental" happenings which, obviously, must have interfered with the complete development of peoples and states. For this reason a separation was made between the investigation of the "natural" course of change and the study of history, and the separation remains with us to this day.

Greek and Roman thought in regard to change in culture was wholly dominated by the biological analogy and the theory of cycles. Plato, for example, set forth (in the third book of the "Laws") a remarkable picture of the "natural" course of the development of culture. Aristotle believed that the different parts of the earth are subject to change, and that this change must follow some order or cycle; the different cultures of men, he thought, are likewise subject to cyclical change. He imagined, as Plato did, that cultures came to an end in some "great winter" of a "great year." This conception of the "great year," which the Pythagoreans imported from Asia, became a central feature of the teachings of Stoicism. The Stoics identified the

of the world. Polybius, following Plato, described what he took to be the cycle of political revolution, "the course appointed by nature in which constitutions change, disappear, and finally return to the point from which they started." Florus "periodized" Roman history by contemplating the Roman people as he would a man passing from infancy to youth, and from manhood to old age. If one should have any doubt as to the wide prevalence of the use of the analogy, he is recommended to glance through the twelfth book of Augustine's "City of God."

The Hebrews were not concerned about "natural" science; they were, on the other hand, deeply impressed by the "accidents" of their national existence. As a result, they found for themselves an explanation of historical "events," which they took to represent the dealings of Jehovah with his people. It came about, therefore, that one of the problems which presented themselves to the early Christian Fathers lay in the necessity of reconciling the Greek and Hebrew points of view, of discovering a middle term between the Greek interest in the development of culture and the Hebrew interest in "events." The solution of this problem which was accepted was that of St. Augustine. He declared that, as the events of sacred history were unique, recurrences were impossible, and hence that the theory of cycles was inadmissible. Augustine, however, had been brought up in the Greek tradition of the biological analogy, and so he conceived of this "unique" history of mankind as falling into divisions representing the youth, manhood, and old age of the human race. He conceived of humanity, like an individual, as undergoing an education. On the one hand, then, he retained the idea of development; on the other, he envisaged this development as taking place but once.

Augustine's mediation of the two points of view was a remarkable achievement; his solution was, however, modified, in its turn, in the seventeenth century. The persistence of the Augustinian tradition may be inferred from Pascal's famous comparison of the whole succession of men, through the ages, to the life of a single man. Fontenelle elaborated this idea, but went on to say that this man, who is the human race, and who is now in his prime, will never grow old—"he will be ever more and more capable of those things which are suited to his prime." With this new interpretation of the biological analogy, the idea of indefinite progress in the future came into existence.

The statements of Pascal and Fontenelle were made in the course of the debate, at the end of the seventeenth century, which is known as the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns, and which was directly concerned with the problem of the development of culture, more especially of the arts. In the eighteenth century, the influences represented in the "Quarrel" led to the elaboration of schemes designed to set forth the "natural" course of the development of culture, on the model of Plato, either with the explicit reintroduction of cycles, as in the case of Vico, or without mention of cycles, as generally in France and England. In these countries, however, it was unhesitatingly assumed that in every culture the same series of stages was repeated. With the beginning of the nineteenth century, the opposition between history and this type of "natural" history (as it was called) became acute. The social sciences had accepted the Greek view that every culture must necessarily go through a definite series of stages, which it is the business of the "historian" to determine. On the other hand, the newly-awakened interest in national history placed a renewed emphasis on the view that every historical event is "unique." The modern historian, therefore, has found himself in the position of St. Augustine, but without being able to avail himself of the interpretation which permitted the bishop of Hippo to envisage in one picture the factual series of historical "happenings" and the theoretical series of stages in the development of mankind.

Historical scholarship, for a century, has emphasized the view that all events are unique, and has verbally maintained the principle that the business of the writer of history is to narrate just what it was that actually happened, without attempting to give any explanation or to express any judgment in regard to the course of events. Critics, however, have not been wanting to point out that this policy involves an impossibility. A narrative cannot be composed without selection of materials, and without some interest or guiding idea in the mind of the author. The writing of history is an art.

should recognize himself as engaged in creative work. There is something to be said for this view—Gibbon was an artist of high rank. It is a far cry, however, from the principles of composition exemplified in Gibbon's "Decline" to those advocated—and employed—by Spengler.

* * *

The aspect of the problem on which the latter lays all his stress is that the essential factor in the production of a history is the inner vision of the historian. In a great work of art, he says, the inward truth "transcends all proof of its several elements or even of their compatibility with one another." In the domain of history men "ought not to think"; the knowledge required is "eternally inaccessible to learned investigation," it is apprehended, not by "reason and cogitation," not by any "rational" procedure, but by "intuitive perception." The import of history is to be reached through "the immediate certainty given by various kinds of intuition—such as illumination, inspiration, artistic flair, the power of 'sizing men up.'" This last simile greatly pleases him, and so he goes on to say that what the historian requires is that flair for physiognomy "which enables one to read a whole life in a face." History, then, has a countenance, and the real historian "can re-enact its becoming from its lineaments," he can "read a destiny in the physiognomy of the past." "It is, above all, the expression of the city's 'visage' that has a history." Only to one, however, who is endowed with the knowledge of men will it unveil itself—the historian is born, not made. "Just," then, "as one penetrates the lineaments of a Rembrandt portrait or a Cæsar-bust, so the new art will contemplate and understand the grand, fateful lines in the visage of a Culture as a superlative human individuality," and the ideal product of the most distinctive activity of the West—the writing of history—would be "the pure physiognomy of the world contemplated by the soul of the eternal child."

It must be confessed that in all this Spengler has only been carrying to an extreme the logical implications of the accepted procedure in historical writing. We have all heard many times, from historians of reputation, that no amount of investigation will reveal the truth of history to the mere scholar. We have, consequently, to look farther for Spengler's distinctive suggestion. This lies in the assertion that the object of the historian's intuition should be the apprehension of the *form* which change takes, and which it has taken, many times over, in the past.

What the procedure advocated by Spengler has revealed to him is that history has a countenance, because it is an organism, and one of "rigorous structure and significant articulation." The past, likewise, is an organism, which is "definitely periodic and purposeful." Cultures, too, are organisms, and world-history is their collective biography. Nations are organisms having a determined life-period. The arts are organisms, "which are born, ripen, age, and for ever die." A mathematic has its existence, its "blood," its life-history of ripening and withering.

Since, then, "for everything organic the notions of birth, death, youth, age, lifetime are fundamentals," "let," says Spengler, "the words youth, growth, maturity, decay be taken at last as objective descriptions of organic states." History will, therefore, have "a series of stages which must be traversed, and traversed moreover in an ordered and obligatory sequence." Cultures are "higher individualities whose coming, growth, and decay constitute the real substance of history underlying the myriad colors and changes of the surface."

* * *

We have before us, Spengler says, eight great Cultures, "all of the same build, the same development, and the same duration." They differ in every detail of the surface; but "organisms of the same genus possess structurally cognate life histories," and so the same stages of life are necessarily found in the biography of every culture. "We know that the quiet course of its development and fulfilment may be disturbed by the pressure of external powers, but never altered." Each of the arts and sciences is limited in duration and is self-contained, just as each species of plant has its peculiar blossom or fruit, its special type of growth and decline. Each art, somewhat curiously, "is an individual organism without predecessor or successor," and each one comes to a sudden end—and it is in this sudden ending that "the organic character of these arts is [illegible] evident."

[illegible]tuition, then, has enabled the author of "The [illegible]ine of the West" to arrive at what he conceives to be a wholly new view of the history of mankind, a vision of the past which, in his opinion, is independent of time, place, circumstance, and even of his own personality. We have, however, learned of late, from the study of Coleridge made by Professor Lowes, that the intuition of the poet (and Spengler regards the historian as a poet) must needs have something to work upon. It will now be apparent, from what has been said earlier, that something working in Spengler's mind, be it intuition, illumination, inner vision, or artistic apprehension, has appropriated to itself, as "the secret of world-history," just that theory of cycles which is the core of the thought of Greece and Rome in regard to change in culture.

There is an interesting passage in the second volume in which Spengler argues that "ideas belong to the living self of the author," that what "one wills to express is in him *a priori*." He might have gained some light on the nature of this principle had he chanced to become acquainted with the ample literature in German on the practise made familiar to all of us by Kipling's lines, beginning "When 'Omer smote his bloomin' lyre." Modern scholarship is not at odds with intuition and vision, but it insists that men should know and confess the sources from which they have derived their inspiration, and their facts. Modern scholarship, no less than modern science, relies upon intuition and imagination, but it demands that all "imaginings" be subjected rigorously to the process of verification—a doctrine which Spengler regards as a distinctive feature of a declining civilization.

If we would know what intuition, divorced from verification, can arrive at, it is only necessary to examine Spengler's description of Greek culture and civilization. "Everything that is Classical is comprehensible in one glance." "The Greek culture is that of the small, the easy, the simple; its technique, compared with Egyptian and Babylonian, is a clever nullity." Greek architecture is a persistent evasion of difficult problems; Greek sculpture is the expression of soulless vitality. "The Greek willed nothing and dared nothing"; his morale "is masked cowardice in the face of grave matters and responsibilities." Above all, "the Classical man had no

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memory and therefore no history," he had an "ahistoric soul"; the "ahistoric Greek nature" neither possessed nor understood the historical. The Greek knew nothing of "the ancestor-series, the genealogical tree that is eternalized with all the marks of historical order in the family-vault of the West." For Herodotus and others, "the past is subtilized instantly into an impression that is timeless and changeless, polar and not periodic in structure"; they also viewed mankind "as a stationary mass."—Merely to open Herodotus and Thucydides, by way of verification, would, however, make an end of such assertions.

Spengler starts with a theory, arrived at by "intuition." He then proceeds to demonstrate the applicability of this theory to actual historical happenings. Though the author is himself unconscious of it, this procedure involves the testing of the theory in presence of one body of fact after another, and thus constitutes a process of verification. If facts and theory fit together in instance after instance, without any sort of violence being done to the former, we may say that a case has been made for the theory. It is of importance, therefore, that we should see how the verification works out. Since the discussion of "Problems of the Arabian Culture" occupies one-fourth of the volume devoted to "Perspectives of World-History," we may take this as a test case, and ask, Do facts and theory coincide? Now, so little correspondence is there between them that the author has been driven to formulate a new conception, that of "pseudo-morphosis," to cover the facts in this conspicuous case. Again, to fit this particular culture into his scheme of thought he has been forced to assert that history, the actual series of happenings in the past, has made a mistake: at Actium, he says, "it should have been Antony who won"—"should," that is, if the events were to be in accordance with the theory. Further, he has been constrained to declare that the actual history of a nation may be "false and artificial"—"false" because in opposition to the theory. Spengler makes use of materials, in themselves of great interest, derived from recent authorities, but on the basis of these materials he strives, by every artifice of assertion, to uphold a theory which the enumerated facts disprove. Is it to be wondered at, then, that men should be perplexed and sceptical when confronted with such a distortion of rational procedure? What the facts adduced by Spengler show is that the "Arabian culture" was the product of a "native" culture subjected to a succession of intrusive cultural influences. Had he examined the facts with the intent of finding an hypothesis, instead of imposing upon them his own "intuitive" explanation, he would have discovered that human advancement has been due to "contact," not to "development"—but then "The Decline of the West" would never have been written.

Notwithstanding his reiterated criticism of the Greeks, the fact remains that it is to Greek ideas that Spengler is most significantly indebted. When he states what Spengler has mistaken for intuition is his own education, to which he has added, for his part, a strong predilection for logical exaggeration and an extravagant use of antithesis.

If, however, Spengler's work is the product of the system which provides the background of Western thought, it must be taken as a condemnation of a situation which permits humanistic scholars to deal with ideas without having any knowledge of their history. Spengler, it is true, acknowledges an indebtedness to Goethe, he has taken from him the motto which expresses the "fundamental intention" of his book, but he accepts, as evidence of originality, the echoes of classical thought in Goethe's writings. The author of "The Decline of the West" has much to say of the problems which lie before scholars in the future; but before we decide upon these problems, should we not try to find out something of the texture of our own thought, not by the continued application of the method of logical analysis, but by the utilization of historical inquiry?

Yet the fact remains that Spengler is deeply indebted to Greek ideas. When he states that "as life is the form in which the actualizing of the possible is accomplished," so "higher history" is the actualizing of possible Culture; when he says that the great problem for scholarship in the future is "to separate the morphologically necessary from the accidental," and so to distinguish, amidst all that is special or unessential, the primitive culture-form, *the* Culture that underlies as ideal all the individual cultures"—he is but making use of the phraseology of a first lesson in Aristotle.

Leader of the Naturalists

ZOLA AND HIS TIME. By MATTHEW JOSEPHSON. New York: The Macaulay Co. 1928. $5.

Reviewed by CHRISTIAN GAUSS
Princeton University

THERE was something essentially massive about Emile Zola and it is fitting that in its form this large six hundred page volume by Matthew Josephson should resemble its hero. It also would seem to have come in the fullness of time. The dates remind us, though it comes almost as a shock, that the leader of the naturalists has been dead more than a quarter of a century. He has receded out of the stormy air of controversy into the serener middle distance of history. The tumult and the shouting have died, many captains and kings have departed, and we had a right to expect that through this clearing perspective we might see in truer focus at least the main outlines of his life and the bearing of his work.

With regard to the life proper, Mr. Josephson has performed his task. It is, so far as the record of events goes, the most adequate treatment we have in French or English, easily surpassing the work of Sherrard, Vizetelly, or Edmond Lepelletier.

EMILE ZOLA

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Through Josephson's narrative the man emerges in his habit as he lived, from his birth and early struggles at Aix, though the period of his sales and successes, to his death by asphyxiation in a Paris room. The Dreyfus affair and Zola's famous letter, *J'accuse*, are treated at length as is proper in a biography though they had little to do with his literary life. As a matter of fact, this excursion into politics magnificently courageous as it was, has tended to obscure the facts. Under the symbolists Zola's era was moving away from him. He was already outliving his own literary movement and fame when his fight for Dreyfus and justice brought him a tempestuous Indian summer of political glory.

The weakness of Mr. Josephson's large volume lies in its failure properly to assess or criticize the philosophical tendencies of Zola's age and in its failure to note the lack of esthetic quality in Zola's work. The biographer's presuppositions at times seem to be very similar to Zola's own which of itself makes for lack of perspective. But on the whole, we feel that Mr. Josephson has deliberately slighted the literary and literary-historical side of his subject. Even Zola's method is discussed seriously only in an appendix where isolated paragraphs indicate that had he so desired, Mr. Josephson might have given us at least something in the way of critical appraisal.

There are, to be sure, slips which indicate that Mr. Josephson is not altogether at home in French literary history as when he tells us for instance that during the trial of Calas Voltaire was living at his villa in Berne and when he assumes that "unanimism" was an offshoot of Zolaism and confined itself to crowd studies such as Zola had made. Where he deals with the onslaught of Brunetière upon naturalism, Mr. Josephson fails, we believe, to see the situation clearly. He assumes that Zola was right and that time has proved Brunetière wrong. It is safer to say that Brunetière was only partly right and Zola as critic almost entirely wrong. Brunetière failed to recognize that Zola was a force. He possessed a brutal massiveness and an aggressive combativity that was bound to make a considerable impact upon his time. The theory of naturalism was, to be sure, as Mr. Josephson recognizes, largely an afterthought of the novelist. It was, however, what Zola most prided himself upon and what he tried to force upon the novelists, dramatists, and critics of his time. The realistic manner which Zola followed had already been employed with equal or greater success by Balzac and Flaubert. Naturalism has been defined as realism with scientific pretensions. It is these pretensions that are Zola's addition to literary history and it is precisely these that competent criticism and competent art have rejected. But after all has been said and done, because of his weaknesses both as artist and thinker, the future will have to recognize that Emile Zola has failed to qualify as a really great man, failed to qualify even as a great man of letters. He will remain a striking phenomenon and an index of French civilization in the eighteen 'eighties. He was the General Boulanger of French letters and, like the general's, his literary *coup d'état* was a failure.

In the Rougon Maquart novels we had a striking example of what is so necessary for literary success, the juncture of a temperament and an era. Science was Zola's God, as it was the God of the 'eighties. Zola misunderstood science. His time likewise misunderstood it. But it was Zola's great good fortune that they both misunderstood it in precisely the same way. Nothing else could explain the astounding sales and the amazing vogue of a novelist who cannot by any stretch of the critical imagination be regarded as one of the grand old masters. It was this juncture, however, which alone made it possible for Zola to foist upon his time the theory of the "experimental novel." The weakness of Mr. Josephson's treatment lies in his failure to make clear how much of this "experimental novel" in theory and practice is now, or should now, be recognized as outworn literary buncombe.

Empress Eugénie

THE TRAGIC EMPRESS. A Record of Intimate Talks with the Empress Eugénie, 19c 1919. By MAURICE PALÉOLOGUE. Translat by HAMISH MILES. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1928.

Reviewed by FRANK MALOY ANDERSON
Dartmouth College

TRIUMPH and tragedy beyond the experience of almost any of her contemporaries marked the long life of the Empress Eugénie. In the days of her triumph, as Empress of France in 1853 to 1870, even Queen Victoria scarcely occupied a more exalted station or commanded more of the interest of the world. In the shipwreck of their lives William II, Francis Joseph, Nicholas II, Maximilian, or the Empress Charlotte were hardly more tragic failures.

Such a career afforded an almost unparalleled opportunity for the writing of memoirs which the world would long read and which conceivably might influence in marked degree the opinions of historians regarding the Empress and the régime of which she was a conspicuous and at times important part. But the Empress Eugénie wrote no memoirs. It is said that Napoleon III exacted of her a promise to refrain from such writing. The promise, if made, does not appear to have extended to conversations which others could put on record and invest with much the same qualities as memoirs. One publication of that kind, set down by Count Fleury, appeared in 1920, shortly after the death of the Empress. M. Paléologue has produced another of the same sort.

The small volume of M. Paléologue falls below the two volumes of Count Fleury in interest and in value. It is a record of fifteen conversations that M. Paléologue had with the Empress at intervals over a period of eighteen years, beginning in 1901. All but one occurred at the Hotel Continental where, just across the Rue de Rivoli from the site of the palace where she had lived in her days of glory, the Empress always persisted in staying whenever she passed through Paris.

The Empress was already seventy-five years old when the first of these conversations occurred. They dealt in the main with a period which had come to an end thirty years earlier. These circumstances

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indicate the light in which the conversations should be read. As materials for history their value is limited. They represent what the Empress would have liked to get accepted as the proper interpretation of some salient aspects of the history of the Second Empire. But as a revelation of the Empress herself in her old age they present a remarkable picture. Her mind was as alert and her interest as keen as in the days of her prime and her power. The only sign of old age lay in her recognition that her rôle had been played.

Opinions and interpretations which are transmitted through others are likely to be colored by the medium through which they pass. It is manifestly so in this instance. Considerable allowance needs to be made for M. Paléologue's propensity to tell the French public what he thinks it expects to hear. As a diplomatist he was not noted for meticulous accuracy in his reports of conversations. There is some reason for suspecting that the same trait has been manifested in his reports of the conversations of the Empress.

The translation is in general well done. Most of the apparent slips are to be found in the original.

A Thesis Novel

THE WELL OF LONELINESS. By RADCLYFFE HALL. With an Appreciation by HAVELOCK ELLIS. New York: Covici-Friede. 1928. $5.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

LESBIAN love has existed since sex began and its human apologists have been not a few, from Sappho to Pierre Louys. Yet no other human attitude has been so overwhelmingly condemned by the multitude. Feminine homosexuality has seemed even a step beyond its masculine counterpart toward the ultimate depravity of the pit, but both have been regarded as too horrible for moral lips to mention save with bated breath. Where one finds the multitude assuming such moral airs—the lustful multitude that battens on details of murder cases but considers homosexuality an "unspeakable" crime—one may well be suspicious of the cause. Sentimentalists may imagine that their horror of "unnatural love" is the very voice of Nature expressing her dread of sterility and extinction; yet Nature creates the abnormal as well as the normal, and so-called "perversions" are common among other animals than man. Not Nature, at least not the "Nature" of the sentimentalists, is at the root of the exaggerated fervor against homosexuality. Nor Ethics, since homosexuality as an actual threat to human life has always been utterly insignificant compared with war, disease, or poverty.

The general feeling has a sufficiently simple and non-moral origin. A part of the individual protective mechanism with which we are born is a highly useful distaste for the unfamiliar—since the unfamiliar is a possibly dangerous realm in which we cannot function normally. Thus we naturally dislike those different from ourselves, and Jews and Gentile, white and negro, come into the world with a latent mutual distrust easily fanned into flame by religious or economic motives. It is not surprising that the deepest emotional reactions should attend the suspicion of sexual abnormality, for this concerns our inmost being. Here is a person in the garb and features of humanity, yet driven by desires entirely foreign to ourselves. What wonder that he or she seems like some dangerous or disgusting animal, whose presence arouses the shudder ordinarily reserved for the snake or the mouse? But explanation is not justification, and the fact that the horror of homosexuality is easily explicable does not justify the smear of moral hypocrisy that has been spread over an instinctive repugnance, nor the muddle-mindedness that has attended it, nor the execrable tosh to which it has given utterance. In fact, a rational attitude toward the whole subject may today fairly be demanded from any person of average intelligence, since, on the one hand, the scientific studies of Havelock Ellis, Forel, Krafft-Ebbing, and others, are easily available, and on the other the increased prevalence of homosexuality has made it a subject impossible to ignore. To demand, however, and to receive are two different things. There will very possibly be found public officials in America just as silly as Sir Thomas Somethingorother, the British Attorney General, who has prohibited the sale of "The Well of Loneliness," the most recent attempt to spread enlightenment on the subject of homosexuality. The existence of such silly people is ample justification for the existence of the book.

The value of "The Well of Loneliness" is primarily educational. The author, Miss Radclyffe Hall, has been a student of abnormal psychology for many years; both her knowledge and absolute sincerity are evident on every page. That she has written her treatise in the form of fiction is an accident of the times; just as philosophers wrote in verse when verse was the fashion, so today when fiction has captured biography, invaded history, and made forays into science, it is natural and legitimate that anyone with a message should choose to express it in the only form likely to gain a hearing. Miss Hall's message may be stated very simply: there are certain people, often highly talented, who are congenitally abnormal with regard to sex; for them the homosexual response is the natural—and indeed inevitable—response; yet their normal neighbors, even if far less virtuous than they in all other respects, treat them with a barbarous scorn and cruelty which is sanctioned by society. Miss Hall's aim, in other words, is simply to call attention to undeniable facts.

* * *

The plot of "The Well of Loneliness" is carefully constructed to exemplify these facts. Its heroine, Stephen, so named because her parents' longing for a male heir was so great that they could not entirely relinquish it, is the daughter of an English baronet, and is brought up in an atmosphere of wealth and comfort. Sir Philip Gordon early divines his daughter's abnormality—suggested by her very appearance; he reads up on the subject and comes to understand her condition, but can never bring himself to speak of it either to her or to his wife. Only when dying does he make the attempt, and then death cuts short his tardy effort. At this point in the story a slight strain is put on the credulity of the reader. One does not expect much wit, perhaps, from an English baronet, but a baronet who reads Greek with his daughter might, it would be supposed, at least find means to put Plato's Symposium in her hands. Miss Radclyffe's assumption that an unpleasant truth must be communicated *in toto* or not at all, that hints or suggestions may never serve the purpose, decidedly underestimates the resources of language. Nevertheless, in life as in fiction people frequently fail to do the obvious thing, so we may let Sir Philip's dulness pass.

Stephen, generous and idealistic, grows up in increasing spiritual loneliness, baffled by the fact that she cannot, try as she will, take an interest in feminine pursuits, while, on the other hand, her real masculine tastes are balked at every turn. She comes to self-knowledge, unassisted, through her abhorrence of her best friend, Martin Hallam, when he falls in love with her. There follows a passionate infatuation for a married woman who plays with Stephen's devotion for a time and then reveals it to her husband who in turn transmits the information to Stephen's mother. Virtually turned out of the house by the latter, Stephen goes to London where she becomes a successful writer. The War comes on, and she is an equally successful ambulance driver. These sublimations ultimately prove inadequate, and Stephen at last forms a happy liaison with another war-worker, Mary Llewellyn. Mary, however, is not a true homosexual, but belongs to the class of those for whom homosexuality is a substitute for the normal relationship, and when Martin Hallam reappears in the story she turns to him. Stephen sacrifices herself for the good of the pair and gracefully withdraws. The book closes with her unconquered cry in the solitude to which she returns: "Acknowledge us, oh God, before the whole world. Give us also the right to our existence!"

* * *

Aside from its thesis and the convincing sincerity with which this is presented, the book is not particularly interesting. Simply as a novel, it is adequate, no more. The characters are faithfully conceived types; the plot moves clearly but slowly; the style with its recurrent trisyllabic beat and nerveless words flows smoothly on the level of sentiment rather than any deeper emotion, so that not infrequently, if this can be imagined, one feels that he is reading a sympathetic work of Longfellow on homosexuality. These defects will perhaps be sufficient, in America at least, to save the book from the censorship to which it would be destined were it a finer work of art.

The Mårbacka Edition

THE MÅRBACKA EDITION OF THE WORKS OF SELMA LAGERLÖF: MÅRBACKA, translated by VELMA SWANSTON HOWARD. FURTHER ADVENTURES OF NILS, translated by VELMA SWANSTON HOWARD. THE STORY OF GÖSTA BERLING, translated by PAULINE BANCROFT. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc. 1928. $2.50 a volume.

Reviewed by VICTOR FOLKE NELSON

VERNER VON HEIDENSTAM'S rousing pamphlet, "Renascence," sounded the first clear note of rebellion against the domination in Swedish literary affairs of the "naturalistic" school founded by August Strindberg and led directly to the rise and development of a group of young, eager-minded writers—the so-called School of the 'nineties. In this group, by far the most significant in Swedish literary history, were writers with such varied gifts as the poets Karlfeldt and Fröding, Böök, the dean of Swedish critics, and the novelists Hallström, von Heidenstam, Molin—and Selma Lagerlöf. Despite their many differences in form, style, and philosophy, they had a single aim; a return to the beauty and color of the earlier literary forms. Because Selma Lagerlöf succeeded much better and more quickly than the others, she has remained the most prominent exponent of Neo-Romanticism in Sweden.

"Mårbacka" reveals how the child Selma's mind became saturated with images from the sagas, legends, superstitious peasant stories, and bits of folklore related to her by her parents, nurses, and neighbors. In "Further Adventures of Nils" (a continuation of the earlier "Wonderful Adventures of Nils") these images, transmuted into marvelous stories for children by the genius of their author, emerge in a series of brief tales about a small boy who, changed into an elf, explores Sweden on the back of a goose.

"Gösta Berling's Saga," as the American edition *should* have been called, is perhaps the best of Miss Lagerlöf's eighteen or twenty books. Here, told with all the beauty of diction and affectionate humanity of spirit that have always characterized her art, she has given us the stirring saga of the Värmland cavaliers, those jovial knights who vainly sought fortunes on the continent during the Napoleonic wars and finally returned to Sweden after the peace of 1814, penniless but avid of pleasure, to put in the remainder of their lives in a Rabelaisian round of living, loving, drinking, and fighting among the manors of the landed gentry, especially in Miss Lagerlöf's native province of Värmland. Gösta Berling, a young priest, forsakes his pulpit to become the most boisterous spirit among the cavalier-pensioners of Ekeby, but eventually achieves the moral regeneration of them all, including himself. With d'Artagnan's splendid verve and Lord Jim's unvoiceable need of convincing himself of his own moral worth, Gösta Berling is a boldly conceived and charmingly portrayed character; and the saga of these mad knights of Domnei is an epic of its kind. George Brandes and the Nobel Committee of Awards were both right in recognizing this book as a masterpiece.

Selma Lagerlöf has just celebrated her seventieth birthday. And here, as a timely tribute to the enduring validity of her work, is a new American edition of her works—the Mårbacka Edition, which gets its name from the Lagerlöf ancestral home in Värmland. These volumes by the first Swedish author to win the Nobel Prize for Literature, and the only woman member of the excessively dignified Swedish Academy, are well translated, well bound, and attractively decorated.

The Saturday Review
of LITERATURE

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This Year . Sometime . Never

ONCE upon a time. . . . No, that was a false start. It wasn't as long ago as that. The whole point of the story is that it happened quite recently. Let me begin all over again.

Once in our own time there was a man who set out to found a new religion. He thought of it not only as a new religion; it was to be, he hoped, *the* religion, that consummation which has been the object of so much speculation and the theme of so much prophecy, The Religion of the Future.

In order to found a new religion four things are necessary. Perhaps there are more than that, but these at least would seem to be essential. (1) A revelation, (2) The power to work miracles, (3) A Sacred Book, (4) A growth of legend about the founder, especially that kind of legend which would suggest that, if he was not actually divine, at least he was divinely inspired.

The first three were, in their way, easy enough. Revelations are still common, and the day of those who have Messages is not past. I am a little vague about the message of the man of whom I write. I think it had something to do with Self-Expression. It seemed that we all have two selves—a Superficial Self and a Deeper Self, and the great thing to do was to slough off the Superficial Self and express the Deeper Self. The Deeper Self, if you gave it a chance, would run naturally to holiness and goodness and mercy, for the Deeper Self in each of us was not merely *our* self: it was also The Deeper Self of the Universe. Something like that. As I say, I am not clear about the details. And in any event they do not concern us here.

As for miracles, our would-be founder discovered, quite accidentally, that he possessed a gift of healing. And, without any deliberate attempt to exploit his gift, he found that many apparently incurable persons, after hearing him preach, and sometimes even from merely entering his presence, went away cured.

The Sacred Book was a thing of slow growth, an accumulation of stories about the founder, extracts from articles he had written, passages from his sermons, and sayings treasured up by his faithful followers.

* * *

It was the fourth requirement that proved the stumbling-block. Legend thrives best when the subject of it can hide himself from the world. Let him shut himself up in the heart of a castle, hedge himself about with taboos, and deny himself to all but a few chosen ones; let him withdraw to desert or mountain or cell; let him wrap up his meaning in dark sayings; let him disappear inexplicably for months and then, without warning, reappear. If he will do any of or all these things then he may become in the eyes of the world a figure of mystery, a being set apart from other men by his strange ways of life, and therefore—the inference is almost inevitable—perhaps touched by the divine fire. Such an one piques curiosity, provokes wonder, and makes ancient credulity live again in the mind, as a dark lonely road will dispose a man almost to believe in ghosts. But alas! where to-day can one find the obscurity that legend loves? Although the founder shunned as he would shun the Evil One himself all modern methods of publicity and refused to give interviews, so that even unbelievers admitted that he was "quite a decent chap," yet he was no match for a Press that had decided that his Movement had "news value." His sermons were taken down verbatim, his cures were blared from the house-tops in enormous headlines, he was snap-shotted and moving-pictured, and even when he would slip away to a friend's house for a few days rest the reporters would smell out his retreat within twenty-four hours. Thus while he lived so fierce was the light shed upon him that the seed of mystery had no chance to take root and grow. He was a Phenomenon, but he was not yet a prophet or an inspiration, still less an object of worship.

After his death his followers hoped that the mists would gather about his memory and invest him with the proportions which they believed belonged to him of right. That was where they made their mistake. For if during his lifetime he had lived in a white light, after his death he became the victim of a blinding glare.

First of all the historians got hold of him. One school saw in him and his ideas the necessary resultant of economic forces. If, they said, you had a capitalist régime dominant for a long period, then the poor got a chance to develop a solidarity among themselves. This "economic bifurcation of society" is bound to be reflected in "the ideological sphere," particularly that of religion. Thus the cry for the release of The Deeper Self from the Superficial Self was merely "the religious analogue" of a demand for "economic betterment" on the part of the "disadvantaged classes in Society." It was all very learned and malignant and plausible and it seemed to dispose of the founder and his claims. For, apparently, "given the economic situation," he had to happen: he couldn't help himself. There was nothing inspired about it.

Another school treated him as a symptom of a decaying civilization. Civilizations, they said, are like organisms: they have their youth, their maturity, and their inevitable decline. Our civilization (do you need to be told?) is on the decline. In this stage we may expect a "recrudescence of superstition, thaumaturgy, vague supernaturalism, and the aberrations of mysticism which in the past have marked the waning of the Hittite, the Egyptian, the Greek, and the Roman cultures." You see, this school differed from the other as one star differeth from another in glory, but, after all, it doesn't much matter whether you are called a Resultant or a Symptom. In either event you have been explained away.

After the historians, the psychologists laid violent hands on him. One professor said that he and his followers were obviously social misfits. This had engendered in them an acute sense of failure and given rise to an inferiority complex. The doctrine of the Deeper Self was simply a frantic attempt to compensate for this inferiority by inventing a mysterious unverifiable personality with marvelous powers. Another dismissed him as a "psychasthenic" suffering from "delusions of grandeur." A third said he was exhibiting "infantile regression." A fourth drew largely on his own imagination for details of the founder's childhood and proved that his "conditioning" had been all wrong. There were a lot more theories—all different. But I have forgotten them. All I remember is that they didn't leave the founder a leg to stand on.

But the cruelest blow was given by the biographers. Quite unintentionally. For in bringing out an exhaustive edition of his letters they were moved only by motives of piety. Their zeal would not allow them to spare the reader anything. The most commonplace items of daily routine, the dreariest records of finance and organization, the lines written in hours of dulness or disillusionment or human weakness, were all exposed, without pity and without judgment. The public read the two large volumes, and this is the sort of thing they found:

Forgive the dulness of this letter, but all day I have been tortured with a return of the old sciatica. I have tried the mustard poultices you recommended, but they brought no relief. I think I must have caught cold coming back from the meeting the other night, for when I tried to get out of bed the next morning the agony was almost more than I could bear. Sometimes I think that I shall soon have to hand over the work to younger and stronger hands, or perhaps I should say legs.

(At this point the editors inserted a long footnote, point out how even during physical suffering the writer's sense of humor did not desert him. They then gave a number of examples of his humor.)

Dear Sir: I make it a practice never to reply to criticisms of my work, but your article in the last number of the *Churchman's Monthly* is so obviously unfair, so manifestly conceived in a spirit of deliberate caricature, that I feel it my duty to expose the injustice of your attack.

"Dear Sirs: I am returning the three suits of woollen underwear to-day and will ask you to send me a size larger. I think you must have made a mistake in the measurement of the waist-line."

Aunt Clara has just left after her annual visit. This year she stayed ten days instead of the usual week. I have been so distracted and out of sorts that I have felt unequal to writing. The truth is, I am afraid, that we do not get on very well together. She is never tired of telling me that my methods are too unobtrusive and that if I were to advertise myself more I should be more of a success both financially and spiritually. She is certainly a very determined woman. Yet if I try to argue with her she assumes an air of martyrdom and declares that "your dear Father, even when he was most *sorely* tried, would never have *dreamed* of speaking to me like that." I need to summon all my patience to put up with her. And now to turn to more cheerful subjects. Our plans for the winter's work are going forward well . . .

I really think it was the Life and Letters that did for him. He might have survived the historians and the psychologists, for so great was the diversity of their theories that in time they might well have neutralized one another, so that Theory itself would have become a Joke. But who can believe in the divinity of a man when he is allowed to know that he suffered from sciatica, used mustard plasters, "made it a point never to reply to criticisms," and had an Aunt Clara whom he found trying?

And so there was no legend—that beastly thing called the modern mind took care of that—and the religion of the future was still to seek.

"Was," did I say? Nay, is, and, I fear, always will be. This year? Next year? Sometime? *Never!*

A Buoyant Biography

SCHUBERT THE MAN. By Oscar Bie. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1928. $3.

Reviewed by Hubbard Hutchinson

"SCHUBERT THE MAN" is a thoroughly misleading title for this book which the Schubert Centennial Committee has chosen, for some reason best known to themselves, as their official biography. Only forty pages are devoted to Schubert's life, and even here the obvious attempt at concentration is disastrous, because no clear chronological line is drawn upon which the bewildered reader can pin the pictures breathlessly hurled at him. We have vignettes of the precocious boy who learned rudiments of music from his ever-vexed musician father. We have glimpses of the young man's employment by Count Esterhazy who housed him in a lodge and fed him among valets and hostlers. We gather that for a time he led a happy Bohemian existence with friends, sharing their rooms and even their clothes, rushing to the home of the Frölichs with compositions on which the ink was scarcely dry, and spending long hours at cafés. We se him journeying about Austria with Vogl, a great singer and the first to spread his songs, composing ceaselessly, and scattering his compositions with such carelessness that they are still turning up.

We know that later his friendly circle dispe[illegible] that his friends moved or married and he f[illegible] himself appallingly alone. We learn further [illegible] he was hopelessly impractical. He sold his compositions outright to his publisher for 800 gulden, thereby destroying a royalty arrangement carefully engineered by his friends. We hear of an illness that permanently impaired his health, and are brought rather abruptly to his death in 1824, at the age of thirty-one.

This material is adequate for a living sketch. But it is presented without plan and interrupted constantly by Mr. Bie's own generalizations which, excellent in themselves, prove disturbing in their placement.

The remaining three-fourths of the book is devoted to an account of Schubert's music, with excerpts from the scores. Much of this analysis is a supreme example of the programme note style, which "explains" music in terms of words, thereby reducing clear musical thinking and powerful emotion to sheer sentimentalism which merely interposes a mawkish mask between hearer and *opus*.

And yet this is not wholly just. Occasionally Mr. Bie does contrive in words a kind of recreation which might be helpful in leading unmusical people from a medium they know into one they do not. But it is a dangerous method. For music is not pictorial and definitive. It cannot present brooks and watermills save by suggestion varying with each auditor.

Fortunately, however, the enthusiasm which prompts these rhapsodies of Mr. Bie's takes other forms. It animates the masterly treatment of the symphonies, and lends affectionate gusto to descriptions of the methods whereby Schubert moved with a new freedom in the symphonic form he found, informing its eighteenth century rationality with the warmth of romanticism. It trumpets in his proclamation that Schubert, not Johann Strauss, first lifted Viennese waltzes from the beergarden to the concert hall, and in his denunciation of Liszt for embalming these waltzes in the mummy wrappings of his ornate arrangements.

In this vein Mr. Bie cannot be too highly praised. His zest everywhere kindles his scholarship. The book is always buoyant.

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The Sage in Meditation, and

DURING the latter half of the second decade of the nineteenth century, when Mr. Shelley was sitting atop of the Baths of Caracalla composing the choruses of "Prometheus Unbound," there were plenty of busy people in Rome. Busy minds and busybodies among the ladies and gentlemen of the English Colony, and many industrious brown pairs of hands among the poor Italians themselves, who have always been rather good at manual labor, whether this was a question of hewn stone, water drawn bodily over stone arches, or paint splashed upon the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. The eyes, brown or gold or impudent hazel, which matched these pairs of hands, probably regarded Mr. Shelley with indulgence or downright approval; he must, in the year 1819, have been a medicinal sight to any eyes which had not grown horny with stupidity or prejudice. The eyes of the busybodies, bent over the pages of the *Fortnightly*, or carefully measuring Suchong in a silver spoon, were thick and dull indeed; they had been purged neither with euphrasy nor rue. They had seen too many "Disgraceful spectacles" and "disgusting exhibitions" in their time to burn with a kindlier light than hatred at the spectacle of Mr. Shelley and the Baths of Caracalla.

"Clambering about among those ruins all day long, when his wife is going to have a baby!" they muttered morosely to the leaves of the *Fortnightly* and of the Suchong, and if they met him at the Bank or the Reading Room they cut him with extreme acerbity or with gusto attempted to knock him down, according to their temperament and sex. "If she calls herself his wife!" said the cutters, but the knockers-down cried, "And he dares to call himself an Englishman!" Lord Byron was wasting his substance in riotous living, but Mr. Shelley was wasting his time atop of the Baths of Caracalla, and his offence was the worser in the nostrils of the English Colony.

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This theory, which may be called a conviction of the essential laziness of poets, undoubtedly prevailed in Rome in the year 1819; in the year 1929 it prevails over the entire *ci-devant* civilized world. It is a fine, finicky, useless sort of business at best, this writing of verse, with a deal of idleness about it, and a general air of sitting on a cushion and sewing a seam of feather-stitches. Which is, of course, pernicious nonsense. It is a bore to wash dishes and an expense to feed the swine, but it is damned hard labor to write a passable sonnet. If they be regarded as luxuries rather than necessities, though if they are something more than passable they may slip into the necessity class along with the white hyacinths, this does not in the least lessen the difficulty of their manufacture; people are always worrying about the hardships of artificial flower makers and rollers of scented cigarettes, and a really hard-worked sonneteer may be a shocking sight when he is sweating over the sestet. The seam is fine, or as fine as he can contrive to make it, but if there is a cushion at all it is probably that bit of carpet covering the seat of a third class railway carriage, or that nettle-bed plush in a "day-coach" coming down from Albany, or that exiguous place in the subway which the stoutish gentleman from Bucharest has lately miraculously occupied. The sonneteer falls into the place and catches the sestet as he relinquishes the strap, but can he manage to write it down on the manila envelope? His salary—and let us hope it is not less than twenty-five dollars—is in the manila envelope if it has the good luck to be Friday, and perhaps he will dine sumptuously on macaroni and red wine, or perhaps he will prefer a tin of baked beans by the comfort of his own gas-ring. But the really important thing is to make the little pencil marks into a recognizable Italian sestet more recognizable as a sestet than the red wine will be recognizable as wine. Ah, the thing is done, and the platform of Astor Place glides gracefully into view, not very like a whale, but far more like a whale than an antelope. It is work, of sorts, this trapping of sestets in the subway, and if the sonneteer fails to turn it to its proper use, it may all count as good training in short-hand and prestidigitation. At least this work (of sorts) can be done without a kit of tools or special training of any kind, though pencil and paper and a fair degree of quiet are useful things to have about you. You may get very dirty doing it; you may deserve a rubber collar and paper cuffs and the respect of your fellow-man. But, if you are thinking of setting up as a sonneteer, you mustn't make the mistake of believing that you'll have it. Your hands will be black, but the fact that the blackness is ink instead of motor oil robs it of the lustre of honest toil; your back as well as your head will ache like blazes, but you cannot pretend that this pain was acquired in a machine shop, and a typewriter lacks the nobility of labor unless it belongs to a large herd of typewriters in the offices of an important wholesale business. My poor sonneteer, you will find there is a prejudice against you; if I were you I should either become a mustard broker or accept the inevitable and continue to write sonnets, which is more amusing than mustard broking and far less lucrative.

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Milton could put it better than I; he knew the uncessant care and the strict meditation that are necessary in his trade. Whose was the error, in the beginning? Did some merchant of the sea-ports, passing inland under Thessalian olive trees, envy the homely slighted shepherd and his pipes, or was the fair and ruddy countenance of David the first offence to the Philistine? It is impossible to say; the sonneteer will never know. It now becomes convenient for this creature to change his sex, like Tiresias; he must be a woman in the next sentence, and myself. I only know that this highly respectable trade, which was Milton's, and at which I labor as a humble artisan, fills the average neighbor of the average sonneteer with clucking suspicions and prejudices. She has cooked her father's dinners for twenty years; very right and proper, too, but what of it, and how?

If my neighbor's father wanted watercress in his salad, and there was none at the greengrocer's, and she had to bicycle eleven miles to get it, since the watercress beds are eleven miles from town, she would think herself both virtuous and energetic, and she would be right in so thinking. But because I have walked ten miles to fetch an abstract idea from the top of a hill, she thinks me both lazy and eccentric, and she is wrong in so thinking. I have cooked many dinners, and good dinners at that, but she has not written even a passable sonnet. I know and recognize the decency and dignity of her work, but in me, or any other poet, she sees only a wild look of having been scrambling over brambles or among the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla.

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There is not the slightest doubt that in that incredible Uranian year which saw the birth of Prometheus and the nobler odes, all the English inhabitants of Rome regarded Mr. Shelley as a very idle as well as a very wicked young man. Whatever cruel things were rumored of the real or reputed children of his loins, these fair and vigorous children of his brain were ignored or forgotten. He was a blot upon the face of nature, a slap in the face of society; a scapegrace, a seducer, and an infidel. Therefore it went without saying that he never worked, save as a dangerous yeast to disturb the established orders; he was incapable of honest toil. The phenomenon of his swift ascent of the Coliseum was no better than the agility of a goat; these creatures nibbled grass and Mr. Shelley nibbled pencils, and the morals of all were notorious. A young male goat might be occasionally persuaded to draw a cart, but Mr. Shelley drew no carts, but only little pictures of trees among the fluttering pages of his note book. Also he scribbled among these pages, when he was not scrambling among the stones of the Coliseum. The idea that Mr. Shelley was an industrious person never entered the frequently-shaken heads of the English Colony.

The poor Italians perceived that he was industrious, because they saw that he was never idle. If they did not always know what was the precise work that he did, they saw clearly that he worked hard at some matter of importance. It would not have surprised them to learn that like Leonardo he invented flying machines or flew among the higher mathematics, but the chances were that he wrote poetry, though he might very likely paint pictures at the same time. The workmen of the arts were versatile and patient; any market gardener knew that, and how the ink of Dante and the pigments of Michael Angelo had been dredged up from hell and pulled down from heaven. An artist was an honest artisan, who worked in the sweat of the brow and made the sinews of his body serve his mind.

Mr. Shelley employed his sinews in a great deal of scrambling, and yet the more intelligent of the market-gardeners knew that it was the incessant scribbling that counted. Here, in the light scrape of the lead upon the paper, so much lighter and slighter than the scrape of catgut upon catgut even, lay the long labor and the uncounted pains, "Alas, what boots it with uncessant care . . . to strictly meditate the thankless Muse?" Almost any Italian market-gardener knows the answer. These, who flourished with their white grapes and lettuces in the year 1819, knew beyond the disputes of a thousand tea-parties, how very hard Mr. Shelley was working.

When he reached the top of the Coliseum, his thin freckled face, so strangely illuminated by the heaven-color of the eyes, would be, perhaps, beaded with sweat and bright with exertion of the swift ascent, but this was nothing; the dark-eyed children and the frolicking goats knew the same lively beating of the heart. But when he rose, a little stiffly, from the flower-encumbered grass, and put his note-book in his pocket, and walked home to Mary, the market-gardeners and the farmers from the Campagna recognized his look and respected it, and, being poor Italians, wondered not at all that an honest artist should be tired to the extreme marrow of his bones by the exertion of scribbling. Their blood remembered the Renascence and their brains retained the teachings of a handful of Grecian slaves. They were not astonished to observe that the cheek-bones may grow salient and the eyes hollow from the slight exertion of composing the lesser choruses of "Prometheus Unbound." The tying-up of vines and the pitching of hay may achieve this alchemy, but they had Dante, at the tired back of the brain, to remind them that both heaven and hell may be as hard as shovelled earth when such an one as Mr. Shelley is set to work among their illimitable fields and vineyards.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

No such interpreter was invited to the tea-parties of the English Colony; Mr. Shelley remained an idler and an infidel. And yet, day by day and hour by hour, as he lay among the rustling blades of the flower-encumbered grass, the whole of "Prometheus Unbound" was unwinding itself from the convolutions of his mind, until the dazzling fabric was erected into words, and dispatched to Ollier to be printed. There is no other art like this, that without instrument or material substance creates itself in beauty. The memory alone would serve, upon a desert island or in a prison cell, to prolong this beauty for an eternity of time; neither wood nor marble nor the pigments of clay are necessary for this divinest art of all. Who, therefore, unless in 1819 he was a determined reader of the Tory reviews, can reasonably doubt the effort and the mortal pains required of the mind in manufacturing these wonders? The mind's own stuff, the essential matter of the brain, is literally spun away and twisted into the making of such works of art and pure inspired nature.

An agreeable madman or a fine inconsequent lady may believe, may persuade his or her exquisite perversity that genius or the humbler talent is a bird or butterfly hovering to alight when it pleases, kissing the averted cheek of the artist with a feathery wing, descending from heaven like a secular holy ghost for a brief moment of ecstasy or fulfillment. The laborer is unworthy of his hire who credits such heresies. Good work is accomplished in the sweat of the brow and the draining away of the heart's blood; there is no other means nor method to produce it.

Mr. Shelley knew this truth as he walked home to Mary, a little stiffly, through the long shadows of the fine Italian landscape. He did not waste much thought upon the evident fact; he was tired, though

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he would inevitably lack the sense to go to bed; he was hungry, though he would inevitably lack the practical appetite to eat his supper. His thoughts were all concerned, and wisely for the purpose of his art, with Prometheus and the spirits. "Light of life, thy limbs are burning through the veil which seems to hide them." If such fiery songs are to escape into the full clarity of the mind there are always a brace of eggs to remain uneaten and a duster to be avoided, and these evasions require a high degree of ingenuity and skill. Mr. Shelley lacked neither energy nor intelligence in the ordinary business of life; he went to the Bank, he provided his household with gold pieces; he hunted villas in post-chaises and took no harm from the upsetting of the same; he said a great many kind words to Mary and wrote a great many kind letters to Claire; he lent money to the Gisbornes and gave it to the Leigh Hunts; he was even thinking of building a boat, when he should have sufficient leisure to afford such luxuries. Meanwhile, he worked so hard that there was nothing left of him but bright skin and lively bone, and that increasing pile of scribbling which he would send to Ollier to be printed, when, in the sweat of his brow, he had finished his scribbling. He would be tired when he had finished it; he might reasonably liken himself to an orange which the Muses have squeezed for their own purposes, save that his empty skin would be fair and freckled like an English apple rather than the fruit of a classic soil. The Roman farmers, bearing their white grapes from the vineyards, observed to themselves that the tall Englishman was tired; they did not interrogate the stoop in his shoulders as to its exact origin among the sinews of the body and of the immortal soul.

* * *

If the common thoughts of the brain are bent to consider Milton or Shakespeare instead of Mr. Shelley, they will falter to realize the industry required of these. Milton, laboring in darkness and the sacred light of his own spirit, was bound to a harder daily task than Samson Agonistes; no galley-slave, no convict breaking stones upon the road, has accomplished, even under the lash or the punishment of starvation, one-half the work which Shakespeare did for stubborn desperate love of the work itself. It is not only profane but stupid to doubt these truths; you need only put "Paradise Lost" or a dozen plays of Shakespeare into the scales of any honest greengrocer to prove the actual weight of ink and paper of which their mighty substance is composed. Even the London Telephone Directory was not compiled by a single intelligence; the most grudging greengrocer must admit that there is a pound of flesh and Christian blood in Shakespeare.

* * *

If anyone believes that, because Byron drank excessive quantities of claret and French brandy and cohabited with the wives of Venetian gondoliers, he did not at the same time work like a navvy and nigger rolled into one disreputable Apollo, that person should make some little effort to rewrite "Don Juan," or even copy the original version on his Corona. He will have his work cut out for him by a sharp pair of shears. If he likes the exercise, he may then try his hand at transcribing "Prometheus Unbound," and end by dashing off a few fair copies of "Adonais," with, one hopes, his own improvements and emendations,

* * *

When, and of course if, this interesting person has completed his experiments, he will no longer be surprised to learn that when Mr. Shelley had remembered to eat his supper, having sung for it to such good purpose, he tumbled into sleep, if not precisely like a felled ox, at least like a very thoroughly stricken deer. He was quite as tired as the anonymous experimenter would be the morning after the big party for the buyer from Kansas City. Let us refresh the tired experimenter by presenting him with two tickets for Mr. Ziegfeld's latest production, and let us permit Mr. Shelley his interval of sleep upon the hearthrug. He has, as he might himself have put it in a letter to Peacock, earned this brief repose. So let us leave him in peace, nor wake him when a few sparks fly into his hair from the fire; to-day he has climbed to the top of the Baths of Caracalla, and to-morrow he may finish "Prometheus Unbound."

Two Poems, by Elinor Wylie

The Pebble

IF any have a stone to shie,
Let him be David and not I;
The lovely shepherd, brave and vain,
Who has a maggot in the brain,
Which, since the brain is bold and pliant,
Takes the proportions of a giant.
Alas, my legendary fate!
Who sometimes rage, but never hate.
Long, long before the pebble flieth
I see a virtue in Goliath;
Yea, in the Philistine his face,
A touching majesty and grace;
Then like the lights of evening shine
The features of the Philistine
Until my spirit faints to see
The beauty of my enemy.
If any have a stone to fling
Let him be a shepherd-king,
Who is himself so beautiful
He may detest the gross and dull
With holy rage and heavenly pride
To make a pebble sanctified
And feather its course with wings of scorn;
But, from the day that I was born
Until like corn I bow to the sickle,
I am in hatred false and fickle.
I am most cruel to anyone
Who hates me with devotion;
I will not freeze, I will not burn;
I make his heart a poor return
For all the passion that he spends
In swearing we shall never be friends;
For all the pains his passion spent
In hatred I am impotent;
The sad perversity of my mind
Sees in him my kin and kind.
Alas, my shameful heritage,
False in hate and fickle in rage!
Alas, to lack the power to loathe!
I like them each; I love them both;
Philistine and shepherd-king
They strike the pebble from my sling;
My heart grows cold, my spirit grows faint;
Behold, a hero and a saint
Where appeared, a moment since,
A giant and a heathen prince;
And I am bound and given over
To be no better than a lover,
Alas, who strove as a holy rebel!
They have broke my sling and stole my pebble:
If any have a stone to throw
It is not I, ever or now.

Sonnet

HOW many faults you might accuse me of
Are truth, and by my truthfulness admitted!
A fool, perhaps, how many caps had fitted,
How many motleys clothed me like a glove.
Thriftless of gold and prodigal of love;
Fanatical in pride, and feather-witted
In the world's business; if your tongue had spitted
Such frailties, they were possible to prove.

But you have hit the invulnerable joint
In this poor armor patched from desperate fears;
This is the breastplate that you cannot pierce,
That turns and breaks your most malicious point;
This strict ascetic habit of control
That industry has woven for my soul.

The essay by Elinor Wylie, printed above, was written in England in the Autumn of 1928, a by-product of many months given over, despite the dangerous accident that intervened, to the writing of poetry. Her last phase as an artist was a return to the form of literary composition which she considered in every respect the highest. During the Autumn she lived quietly in The Old Cottage in the town of Henley-on-Thames, taking long daily walks alone through the surrounding countryside, and "strictly meditating the Muse" to her never "Thankless." May and June of the early summer had likewise found her at the flood-tide of her poetic powers; and even in July when she was confined to her bed in great pain from the injury to her back, and in August when she was still recovering from its aftermath, she wrote constantly and diligently. The two poems that follow the essay are of special interest in establishing in her own words two of the most fundamental traits of her nature. To the last she lived spiritedly and high-heartedly, fiery sometimes in opinion, intense in artistic integrity, but with a philosophic intelligence that rose superior to any "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and a charity that extended almost infinitely far.

Elizabethan Drama

WORDS AND POETRY. By GEORGE H. W. RYLANDS. New York: Payson & Clarke. 1928. $3.

Reviewed by ARTHUR COLTON

MR. RYLAND'S intimacy with Elizabethan drama is such as to make difficulties for those whose intimacy is less. Almost any character in Shakespeare is recognizable on reference to readers to whom the names of Heywood's heroines call up no associations; Mr. Ryland's knowledge of both highways and byways of English poetry is extraordinary for a man of his years. His youth shows itself, not in any juvenility of judgment or inaccuracy of scholarship, but in a certain sensitive freshness of feeling. The feel of most men for poetry is keenest and most delic before years and usage have dulled its reactions. The aged Emerson once advised a young man to lose no time before reading Shakespeare's sonnets: "Read them while your heart is young."

The first part of the volume is a Fellowship Dissertation, and somewhat miscellaneous. It ranges from Chaucer to Housman for illustrations; Part II is all on Shakespeare, and more sequential and mature. The main subject of it is the three periods of Shakespeare's style, and an explanation of the curious fact that in the early plays there is little prose, in the middle plays a great deal, and in the last plays again almost none. He plausibly argues, and effectively illustrates, that the final Shakespeare dropped prose partly at least because he had achieved a blank verse style as flexible and free as prose, if not more so—flexible and free enough for the needs of drama and character. In the early plays is the realistic medium for low comedy characters. Then the higher comedy characters obtained it (Hotspur, Mercutio, Shylock, Rosalind, Beatrice). He found himself dramatically in prose. The early Elizabethans were drunk with language, they revelled in word-sipping, word-tossing, and bombast. The verse was stiff in texture, stiff with embroidery. It dominated character and situation. Shakespeare began to draw away from it, burlesquing and ridiculing as he did so. In the middle plays, anyone, even Hamlet, may drop into prose, for reasons more subtle than reason.

It is well to remember that the Shakespeare scholar who devotes himself to Stratford, or whether the poet's knowledge of law was something or not, or to any such matters, is concerned with side issues and unimportant things, mostly uncertain; whereas the man who writes of Shakespeare's rhythm, diction, style, and esthetic development is concerned with a main issue of which the evidence is before him. The plays and poetry are the real things. They style lies close to the secret of the man. His outward life was perhaps relatively uneventful and its events matter relatively little. The difference between the man who wrote "Two Gentlemen of Verona" and the man who wrote "The Tempest" should interest us most. How many children he had, or if his father was a glover and went bankrupt, need not interest us at all.

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Books of Special Interest

Big Tops and Blue Sky

GOING TO PIECES. By ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1928. $2.50.

SAWDUST AND SOLITUDE. By LUCIA ZORA. Boston: Little, Brown & Company. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by HERSCHEL BRICKELL.

MR. WOOLLCOTT wished to become a schoolteacher when he finished college, but the headmaster told him he would have to lick recalcitrant students, and just as that remark was made, several members of the football squad passed by. So Mr. Woollcott became a critic of drama, a safer profession, and in the hands of one with so much zest for the theatre, as for most of the other agreeable trivialities of life, a more varied and attractive one.

If Lucia Zora had wished to be a schoolteacher, the prospect of having to lick recalcitrant students would never in the world have deterred her. Her family craved to have her become a singer; she fell early in love with the circus, and having joined it, soon became an animal trainer, making lions and tigers lie down and roll over, jump through hoops, and occupy adjacent seats without trying to tear each other into tatters. Also she put on an act with the "bulls," otherwise elephants, riding out of the ring on the tusks of the mighty Snyder while he walked sedately along on his hind feet.

What Mr. Woollcott's secret ambition may be there is a chance that we shall learn now that he is taking a vacation from Broadway for a whole year. There was never any doubt about Lucia Zora's innermost yearning. She wanted nothing so much as a home in the country, with her husband, Fred Alispaw, superintendent of the menagerie. All the time she was popping the whip for the big cats and the bigger elephants, she was thinking about a ranch house, with blue sky in place of the gray-white of the "big top."

Her book tells how she got her dream; indeed, it goes too much into detail about her farming operations, because it is the career as a circus performer that is most entertaining to the rest of us. Why Miss Zora, the daughter of a highly respectable New York State family, and a woman of culture, wished to tame animals is as mysterious as why she wished to be a rancher's wife. But why people choose the careers they do is often as fundamentally puzzling to outsiders, anyway, as the eternal mystery of why they choose the husbands or wives they do.

Aside from all this, Mr. Woollcott's book with its punning title, is a collection of light essays, written with genuine felicity and charm, as agreeable to the mental palate as a soufflé made by a *cordon bleu* is to the physical, and about, it must be said, as nourishing. In addition to the theatre, Mr. Woollcott is interested in croquet, murder, old magazines, Edwin L. James, and gossip.

Miss Zora's book, edited by Courtney Ryley Cooper, once press agent for Miss Zora's own circus, and still able to make gray-haired old wrecks feel the thrill of the circus as they did at the snaggle-toothed age of nine years, has some exciting stuff in its earlier chapters, including a hair-raising description of an elephant stampede during a storm.

In some vague way I suspect there is a connection between the career of a successful dramatic critic and a successful animal-trainer . . . . And if Miss Zora finally retired to the peace of a ranch, is not Mr. Woollcott laying plans for a retreat to the solitude of an East River apartment?

Carlyle's Writings

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THOMAS CARLYLE'S WRITINGS AND ANA. By ISAAC WATSON DYER. Portland, Maine: The Southworth Press. 1928. $10.

Reviewed by WALDO H. DUNN
College of Wooster

THIS first important bibliography of Carlyle since Richard Herne Sheperd's in 1881 is the work of a sometime United States Attorney for Maine. It represents the enthusiastic labor of more than forty years. Mr. Dyer's achievement is comparable to Judge John Marshall Gest's recent study of Browning's source, "The Old Yellow Book." That two such volumes should within three years be published by busy lawyers is heartening. If America continues to develop professional men of this type we may feel that our cultural future is secure.

The edition consists of six hundred copies beautifully printed on paper of high quality. The arrangement is admirable. The comments which follow the collation of outstanding works make the book far more than a mere catalogue. In addition, Mr. Dyer has had good helpers. J. A. S. Barrett, of Peebels, Scotland, contributes a paper on the principal portraits, statues, busts, and photographs of Carlyle. James L. Caw, Director of the National Galleries of Scotland, furnishes a commentary on Carlyle's portraits. Dr. Charles Frederick Harrold considers the sources for "The French Revolution." Such a work is sure to be useful.

Notwithstanding its many good qualities, the bibliography has serious defects. Many of these arise from prejudice and a closed mind. The author is convinced of Froude's unreliability as biographer of Carlyle, and arrays himself with the followers of Alexander Carlyle. "The whole controversy has been thoroughly threshed out," he writes, "and may be regarded as settled, so far as such disputes ever can be settled." In consequence, he disparages Froude's versions of important matters, and shows little sympathy with those who support Carlye's chosen biography. He calls David Wilson's "Mr. Froude and Carlyle" "a valuable book on the subject," apparently not recognizing that it is founded on anonymous gossip to such an extent as to be absurd and ridiculous. He refers to Wilson's biography of Carlyle, now in course of publication, as "a reply to and correction of Froude's," and says that it has had "almost unanimous praise from the reviewers." The fact is that Wilson's "Carlyle" exhibits the same defects as his previous books on the subject. When an adequate review of it does appear we shall know that Wilson has made only another contribution to the gaiety of nations.

Furthermore, Mr. Dyer affirms that Moncure Conway's "Autobiography" contains "important corrections" of Froude, not knowing how untrustworthy Conway's statements are. He refers approvingly to Sir James Crichton-Browne's extravagant criticisms of Froude, seemingly unaware that at the time of Sir James's entrance into the discussion the leading medical journals of Great Britain denounced his methods most severely. "The flame of controversy has unhappily been fanned by the wild incursion into the matter of perhaps the most injudicious writer of the present day," wrote the editor of the *Medical Times and Hospital Gazette*, July 4, 1903, in dismissing Crichton-Browne's part in the controversy. Mr. Dyer speaks also of Norwood Young's recent book as " a savage attack on Carlyle's character and writings . . . of slight, if any, value." Young's volume cannot, however, be dismissed thus lightly. Indeed, it is a study which is compelling a reappraisal of Carlyle.

For the most part Mr. Dyer merely repeats the old charges advanced by Froude's enemies. Thus he remarks: "Carlyle firmly intended, to destroy the love letters which passed between him and Miss Welsh before their marriage, so sacred did he hold them. His desire was frustrated by the letters being displaced." He does not know that documentary evidence exists which entirely disproves Alexander Carlyle's story that had Mary Carlyle known what her uncle's wishes in regard to the letters were Froude would never have seen them. As I am just on the point of publishing the results of my study of the Froude-Carlyle controversy, I shall not here speak at greater length of the many errors which Mr. Dyer's bibliography helps to perpetuate.

Finally, I regret to find careless errors of typography and many deplorable omissions. A bibliography is satisfactory and valuable so far as it is a dependable guide to all important material. It is one thing to prepare an incomplete bibliography; quite another to prepare one that is definitive. I can refer to only a few omissions by way of example. There is no reference to the very important "Letters of Edward Fitzgerald to Fanny Kemble." Four indispensable articles which appeared in the medical press of Great Britain during 1903 are not listed. Of the half dozen letters which Froude and Mary Carlyle sent to the London *Times* in 1881 only one is catalogued. There is no reference to the long editorial in the *Times* of May 9, 1881, although it is unusually significant.

Thankful we must always be to Mr. Dyer for the faithful labor and devotion he has put into this volume. I turn from it, however, with regret that so good a book was not made better.

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The Lessing Bi-Centennial

By KUNO FRANCKE
Harvard University

THE lonely uncompromising man, the two hundredth anniversary of whose birth will, like a national holiday, be acclaimed on January 22nd by multitudes of Germans, was a shining example of how barrenness of surroundings and limitation of perspective may be turned into incentives for achievement and intense inner activity.

There was next to nothing in the Germany of Lessing's time that helped to inspire him. At no period of his life did he have a social background worthy of his intellectual distinction. Not only the young critic, but even the mature and undisputed master of the drama was in constant and often desperate financial straits. By Frederick the Great, whose mental and moral stature no other writer of his generation came so near attaining, he was deliberately ignored and neglected. During the very years when in his "Nathan" and "The Education of the Human Race" he reached the climax of constructive thought, he was confined to the walls of a sleepy provincial library which made him feel that he was doomed "to rot among musty tomes." The abiding character of Lessing's contribution to modern culture is intimately connected with this contrast between his innermost striving and the impediment of *milieu*, mental make-up, and training.

As an art critic Lessing was handicapped by his scholastic aloofness from truly great works of art either ancient or modern. None of the plastic masterpieces from which Winckelmann drew his insight into Greek beauty of form, he knew in the original. He shared the blind rationalistic contempt of his contemporaries for Gothic architecture. He had no eye for color and no real appreciation of the Italian Renaissance. He utterly failed to understand the great Dutch painters. What is it which in spite of all these defects makes his "Laocoon" a source of artistic inspiration even to-day? It is the strictly logical insistence upon suggestiveness as the necessary element of all art. By sheer reasoning, without any instinctive feeling either for poetry or the fine arts, Lessing was led to discover the essential aberration in two prevailing tendencies of the literature and the art of his time: the over-elaborateness of description in baroque poetry and the overcrowding of *motifs* in rococo sculpture. He thereby struck at the root of the heaviness and unsuggestiveness of most of the literary and artistic production of his age. But he also established thereby an esthetic principle of universal significance. For he clearly saw that true art, whether poetry, or sculpture, or painting, should stimulate the imagination, should set the mind free, should lead not to a passive and vacant staring at things, but to a widening and heightening of inner self-activity. Thus this seemingly cold rationalist became the precursor of romantic feeling and emotional rhythm. And we may well invoke his name in the present-day struggle for self-expression and the life of the soul in art.

Similar things might be said about Lessing's dramatic criticism. Most of the plays analyzed with such acumen and wit in his "Hamburgische Dramaturgie" seem hardly worth the keen attention which he bestows upon them. What gives to his treatment of these conventional French dramas and their German imitations permanent value is that by these artificial and unnatural productions he exemplifies *e contrario* what natural and genuine feeling is. When he amuses his readers by showing how a supposedly tragic hero dies "of nothing but the Fifth Act," when he ridicules the ghost in Voltaire's "Semiramis," when he represents Corneille's "Rodogune" as a monstrosity rather than a thing of grandeur, we feel that his negations after all are only the reverse side of the positive endeavor to clear the ground for what is truly tragic, great, and human. And by his emphasis upon the free and grand outline of Shakespearean characters, and above all by his enlightened, though historically incorrect, interpretation of the Aristotelian theory of tragic emotions, he gives to the drama and particularly to tragedy a fuller meaning and a deeper purpose—the purpose of holding before us in concentrated form a comprehensive and high ideal of humanity and thereby revolutionizing, reshaping, and refining our whole spiritual life. In the age of Ibsen, Hauptmann, and Shaw this conception of the drama hardly needs additional corroboration.

The dramatist Lessing has suffered from the attempt, by indiscreet admirers, to place him on a plane with Shakespeare. There is indeed nothing Shakespearean in his temperament. The poet's "divine frenzy" was entirely alien to him. None of his dramatic characters are instinctive growths. They are all consciously made. They are all parts of his intellectual striving; and as such they belong to the whole scientific trend of European culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The wonder is that this keen scientific observer by deliberate choice should have been able to create characters of intense and striking individuality. What makes his Tellheim and Minna, his Odoardo and Emilia, his Nathan and Saladin truly living beings and gives them power to stir audiences of the twentieth century is that they all are embodiments of Lessing's own vivid consciousness of the moral responsibility of the individual. They are all symbols of the spiritual self-regeneration of Germany which from disintegration of the Thirty Years War and the tyranny of princely absolutism, through cultivation of the inner self, finally led to the cosmopolitan joyousness of the golden days of Weimar.

What finally about Lessing, the religious and philosophical thinker? Here perhaps, we see him most conspicuously lifted above the limitations of his time. To be sure, he shared with the age of Rationalism a probably exaggerated esteem for the purely intellectual. He lacked "the sense of awe," the chief source of religious inspiration. His ideal of an all-embracing, all-tolerant world union of enlightened individuals was perhaps too vague and abstract to satisfy the deepest longings of the heart. But can there be any doubt about the universal value, the eternally invigorating quality of his conception of truth seeking? The search for truth was to him not a mere process of *finding out facts, it was a living principle* of moral and spiritual growth. In his own ever memorable words: "Not the truth in the possession of which a man is or believes himself to be, but the sincere striving to arrive at the truth makes the worth of a man. Possession makes him indolent, inert, haughty. Striving alone widens and strengthens his being. And in striving alone lies the assurance of his ever growing perfection." Here Lessing, the hard-headed critic, the penetrating observer of the actual, turns into a believer in undemonstrable verities, into a Faust-like prophet of infinite progress toward the divine. It is a fitting climax to his career that the last words of his last essay should deal with the ascent of the spirit to ever new and higher transformations of individual life. "Why should I not return as often as I have become fit to acquire new insights and new powers? Did I acquire in one life so much that it would not seem worth the trouble to come again? Is not all eternity mine?"

Well may the Germany of to-day, defeated, cramped, and oppressed, take courage and pride in this sturdy and victorious fighter for spiritual progress and liberty. But his message is not for Germany alone, but for all **nations.**

Confusion

THE DEVIL'S SHADOW. By FRANK THIESS. Translated from the German by H. T. LOWE-PORTER. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1928. $2.50.

Reviewed by JOHN HYDE PRESTON

ONE of the younger German novelists, Frank Thiess belongs to the sad, torn generation that has grown up with fast eyes on a renaissance of the youth of Germany, and seems still in treacherous, under-eddied waters.

His book is typical of the German outlook, date 1928. Ten years since the last booming of cannons. There is hope, youth, a tumult of ambitions—colliding. But values are shot to tatters; standards are running crazily on the rim; morals are as unsteady as sane mental balances. The age of gasoline and wasted time. The age of money and orgies. The age of stale perfumery. Everything balancing on the grim edge. And hope . . . and youth . . . meantime . . . for a little. The sensation to be had from a reading of "The Devil's Shadow" is one of an exotically lighted room, full of rank cigar smoke, the click of chips, and *beautifully dressed women.*

Caspar Müller, the principal figure, is a good-looking milksop with artistic longings of a vague sort, a mania for fame, and a mania for women. He tries the stage, and fizzles, having already fizzled in everything else attempted. Then he tries journalism, and fizzles again. He tries to keep a mistress, and loses her. He tries to fall in love with a neurotic, fear-obsessed young girl, and begins to have dangerous nightmares. Life goes on, writhing, foaming; it is a foam that is greatly scum. He gets into serious trouble, and wriggles out, again and again; but trouble leaves its impress on his mind. Finally he emerges from the awful dream, married to a frilly, wild young woman, his artistic leanings quite gone out upon thin air, his mind contorted—and Caspar off to America on a mission of business.

Herr Thiess is doubtless a faithful artist. He is merciless, and it is right that he should be. He seems to have no sympathy with this spineless, whirling, obsessed generation he belongs to; it is the inevitable lumber of the German mind, he says, that has weighed all down.

He makes his case pretty clear. But the translator has been too literal; he has missed the spirit of both context and the style. The book is ajar with verbal absurdities.

A Suggestion

To get the reading habit: Buy a trough bookcase that will sit by the chair you most frequently use, or your bed, or your desk. Keep in this the books you are reading, the titles just under your eye, and carry on with your reading whenever you have half an hour's leisure.

IDA A.R. WYLIE

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The New Books

The books listed by title only in the classified list below are noted here as received. Many of them will be reviewed later.

Biography

PURCELL. By HENRI DUPRÉ. Translated from the French by CATHERINE ALISON PHILLIPS and AGNES BEDFORD. Knopf. 1928.

The first chapter of this critical biography is devoted to a brief account of the atmosphere in which Purcell's musical ancestors passed their lives and to an exposition of the general character of their art in order to show in what respects he resembles and differs from them. Chapters follow on the history of the Chapel Royal, on the life of Purcell, and on the musical characteristics of his works. Although the whole affair makes pretty dull reading, a good index and an adequate bibliography give it some value as a reference work. Students ought to beware, however, of accepting too trustfully the statements on pages 15-18 in regard to the Puritans.

LETTERS OF MARY NISBET, COUNTESS OF ELGIN. By NISBET HAMILTON GRANT. Appleton. 1928. $5.

The letters of Mary Nisbet, wife of the Lord Elgin who carried off the marbles of the Parthenon to England, give a lively account of the years of his ambassadorship at Constantinople and the less happy ones spent as a prisoner of war in France. Although over-weighted with the trivialities which inevitably form the bulk of correspondence between a devoted daughter and solicitous parents, a reader who has the patience to glean the pages of this book may gather a small harvest of interesting facts concerning Turkish customs, travel in the Levant, and the life of a grand lady of high diplomatic rank gifted with an ardent and enthusiastic nature, tender emotions, and an untrained but observant eye. Not the least of his entertainment will come from the revelation of the extent to which a diplomat's wife of the first years of the nineteenth century was permitted to ignore the rules of punctuation and spelling.

ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL. By KATHERINE MACKENZIE. Houghton Mifflin. 1928. $5.

This is a work well worth doing and it has been done well. One of America's greatest scientists is presented here not only as a discoverer, but as a man; intensely alive, filled with enthusiasm about the human world, as well as about the world of ideas. Significant incidents in his boyhood forecast the career he was to pursue so brilliantly. Bell was a striking example of hereditary genius. His father and his grandfather were both pioneers in the science of sound production by vocal organs. While engaged in the humble craft of shoe-making the elder Bell studied Shakespeare and became an elocutionist of note. The idea of "pure speech" was drilled into young Bell from his childhood. That discovery of the telephonic transmission of words which revolutionized the world did not flash upon the man of genius as a sudden inspiration but came as the result of long, arduous years of study and investigation, involving discouragement almost amounting to despair. And without that additional talent Nature had conferred upon him to aid his daring originality—skill in teaching—it is possible that the finest consummation of his power might have been lost to the world.

The story of how Saunders and Hubbard, parents of his pupils, came to his rescue with substantial backing of money, is told with vigor and simplicity by Miss Mackenzie, whose biography is marked throughout by truth and clarity. She has injected some pretty touches about Bell's courtship of Miss Hubbard, with whom the ardent youth "was in love as never was man in love before." Alexander Bell was a many-sided genius. He invented the telephone, and his name has been so linked with that work that it is seldom recalled that he experimented with kites and constructed the "aerodrome," the forerunner of our modern seaplane. The narrative of the flight and disaster of "The Red Wing" is spiritedly described and it is immensely interesting to find how Bell's faith in the ultimate triumph of the seaplane and aeroplane has been more than justified. He lived long enough to see many of his wildest dreams fulfilled, and not the least of his rewards is that the task of writing his biography fell into such competent hands.

CHICAGO MAY, HER STORY. By MAY CHURCHILL SHARPE ("Chicago May"). Macaulay. 1928. $3.

Mrs. Sharpe's autobiography realizes only a small part of its possibilities. It is an obviously authentic account by a professional criminal of her long career as a blackmailer, thief, procuress, and practitioner of the creep and badger games. Chicago May wastes no emotions: she has reformed and intends to lead what is called the respectable life, but only because she has grown old and lost a part of her nerve and cunning. The respectable life, she realistically acknowledges, will be safer and more profitable, now that the years add up. She is not in the least penitent. She was a superior criminal because she had a superior mentality, and she sees no reason, society being what she found it, to be ashamed. Her point of view and her hard-boiled intelligence are strikingly like those of Moll Flanders. From all this, conceivably, might come a sociological document of first-rate importance.

Unhappily, lack of literary skill prevents any such dénoûement. Chicago May honestly tries to tell her story and, for the most part, honestly fails. Her book has neither chronological sequence nor coherence of any other kind. The story moves back and forth through the years and across the map without plan, half-finished accounts of crimes and jails and lawyers constantly being interrupted by irrelevant and incompletely given details of something else. Pointless anecdotes shift the narrative to new and strange subjects that are never quite completed. Nothing is ever finished, no comment is ever fully documented, no narrative is ever carried through to the end. The most important matter in the book, for instance, the rather famous Guerin affair, is alluded to from time to time and sometimes sketched in at some length, always with a promise that it will be fully narrated later on. But one closes the book without knowing precisely what happened, or what part Chicago May had in it, or how it was related to her earlier and later life.

One must except from this complaint, however, the fifty-odd pages that deal with Mrs. Sharpe's experiences in Aylesbury Prison. The mordant clarity of this portion contrasts sharply with the disorder of the rest of the book. Herein keen suffering has made an artist of Chicago May, and no one can read these chapters without being deeply moved. They suggest that Chicago May ought to face the problems of literary composition with the same determination that she brought to those of her earlier profession, for a promise of similar success is implicit in them. If she does so, another book may well be of great interest and even greater value to the public.

MARY'S ROSEDALE AND GOSSIP OF LITTLE YORK. By ALDEN G. MEREDITH. Ottawa, Can.: Graphic Co. 1928.

The history of the Jarvis family, notable people in Canada, is the subject of this carefully written volume. It starts off as a running narrative, but soon enters into the spirit of correspondence, and ends up that way. The letters are chiefly those from William Botsford Jarvis, sheriff from 1827 to 1864, to his immediate family, and their replies. He met many prominent people, and his experience covered a wide range. "Rosedale" in a select residential district of Toronto, was the family seat, a gathering place of politicians and distinguished foreigners. The descendants of the U. E. Loyalists will be especially interested in this book. It is profusely illustrated and contains reproductions of old family portraits in the costumes of the early nineteenth century.

Biography

SCOTLAND'S ROYAL LINE. By *Grant R. Francis.* Dutton. $7.

THE MAGNIFICENT MONTMORENCY. By *Cyril Hughes Hartmann.* Dutton. $3.75.

CHRYSALIS. By *Zephine Humphrey.* Dutton. $2.50.

Drama

PALM SUNDAY. By ROMAIN ROLLAND. Holt. 1928. $2.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau is not the most obvious subject for a historical drama. Neither his life nor his doctrines are essentially of the theatre, yet his influence upon the French Revolution was admittedly so strong that Romain Rolland, in writing his series of plays designed to present that period in epic form, could hardly avoid some utilization of his character. He has chosen to present Rousseau in the Prologue to this group of plays, which has now been translated into English under the title "Palm Sunday." Rousseau's actual appearance therein is comparatively brief, but the presence of the man, already conscious of the coming storm and of his own madness and death, is felt throughout.

The date is 1774, the place the terrace of a château belonging to a Bourbon prince,

(*Continued on page 609*)

Preacher and Brawler

Rasputin, the Siberian peasant, ruled over rulers and swayed the destinies of nations by the power of his eye. He was the penitent pilgrim who preached redemption through sin—and practised what he preached. The Tsar of all the Russias fell on his knees before him and called him a "Christ."

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— Laurence Stallings, *McCall's Magazine.*

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Points of View

Christian Science

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I have before me your issue of December 8 containing reviews by Woodbridge Riley of the two books, "The Stammering Century," by Gilbert Seldes, and "The Confusion of Tongues," by Charles W. Ferguson.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of an individual less fitted by professional experience and religious training fairly to evaluate the teachings of the Christian Science religion than is Woodbridge Riley, who on so many occasions, has been a self-appointed critic of this Christian religion.

That Mr. Riley is discredited as an authority on Christian Science is definitely indicated by the fact that only a short time ago, "The Cambridge History of American Literature" was withdrawn from sale and circulation by the publisher that a misleading article on Christian Science contributed by Mr. Riley might be deleted from its pages.

These two books flagrantly misrepresent the Christian Science religion. The inaccuracy of Mr. Seldes's book is evidenced in his statement that the Massachusetts Metaphysical College was forced out of Boston because of the "teaching of Malicious Animal Magnetism." Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer and Founder of Christian Science and an authority on this religion, strictly forbade the use of animal magnetism, mesmerism, suggestion, or hypnotism by any Christian Scientist in the practice of this religion. The Massachusetts Metaphysical College was neither forced out of Boston nor forced to close. It was closed by its own Board of Directors at Mrs. Eddy's request, as recorded in "Retrospection and Introspection," pages 47-49, and prospective students referred to Mrs. Eddy's writings, from which all of the instruction of the College had been taken.

As for there being any secret doctrines about Christian Science, I need only refer to the Christian Science textbook, "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures," and Mrs. Eddy's other writings and to the Christian Bible. All of Christian Science is taught in the writings of Mary Baker Eddy and in the Bible; and these books are on sale at all Christian Science reading rooms and are available for study at all up-to-date public libraries.

Mr. Riley brings up again the worn out accusation, which has been disproved so many times, that Mrs. Eddy got her understanding of Christian Science from Phineas P. Quimby. It is astonishing that anyone with the facts and court records available should believe such a statement, to say nothing about putting it in print as authoritative. As for Mrs. Eddy's letters, which were cited by Horatio Dresser in his "Quimby Manuscripts," being withdrawn under pressure by the Christian Science organization and the plates of the Milmine book being destroyed, it should be known to you that the publication of the letters, as indicated, was in violation of the copyright law and they were withdrawn by the publisher of the book for that reason and for no other. The plates of the Milmine book were sold for junk, inasmuch as the book itself was a financial failure.

It seems that Mr. Seldes and Mr. Ferguson, in writing about Christian Science, have taken their material almost exclusively from criticisms of biased critics and have devoted practically all of their discussion of Christian Science to throwing mud at this Christian religion, rather than deducing reliable evaluations from court records, state documents, and other authentic sources.

No one can object to a fair criticism which takes facts, authentic records, and obviously practical results into consideration. Moreover, the public has a right to demand that they be told the truth regarding Christian Science, the same as about any other subject.

Mr. Seldes and Mr. Ferguson in their books and Mr. Riley in his review have extended themselves to besmirch the good name of a good woman and to denounce a successful religious body which in fifty-two years has established 2300 self-supporting churches, in all parts of the world; established a daily newspaper of international scope, which has won the admiration and commendation of the greatest newspaper editors in the world, and established two successfully operating magazines in the English language as well as one in German and one in French.

The growth of Christian Science has been the result of the healings brought about by its teachings. No campaign for membership has ever been conducted, no evangelistic services have ever been held, and no campaign for funds has ever been put on to raise the necessary money with which to build its church buildings and finance its institutions.

Christian Scientists are willing to have the value of this religion determined by the practical results of its teachings. Practical results constitute the only true test of the right of this religion to permanency and the results speak for themselves.

ORWELL BRADLEY TOWNE.
Christian Science Committee on Publication.

A Correction

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
SIR:

In the reviewing of "Confusion of Tongues," by Charles W. Ferguson, your reviewer has erroneously given the Unity School of Christianity a Chicago address. Not that it matters, but it might indicate other more important mistakes . . . . Unity headquarters are at Kansas City, Mo., and there is *no* "fixed price per prayer" connected with this optimistic and beneficent religious organization. All contributions are free-will, without doubt.

The writer does not "belong" to the Unity School of Christianity but writes in fairness and *truth*. Such sweeping statements as your reviewer indulges in are in bad taste—unless he be surer of his subject.

FLORENCE DUGGAN.

Erie, Pa.

Futility

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

An alternative presents itself to the solution you seem to propose in your article, "Futility"—the modern writers who embrace futility may be inferior instead of superior intelligences. The superior minds of to-day may be among the extraverts you mention—driven to action by the age they live in. Minds which might turn inward may be turned outward by the brilliance of this expanding world. The men of futility, it may be, are unable, for all their introversion, to see in this great flowering of energy any spiritual significance, unable to see through it to the life that produces it. To see no permanent value in material things appears to be about as far as they can go.

If I may borrow a figure from a great introvert of the nineteenth century, perhaps with these great spectacles of scientific discovery and invention before them they lack the eyes to see anything through them. Instead of being smitten with wonder they are overcome by a sense of their inferiority. It is easy to be so overcome in the face of the tremendous and constantly increasing universe, if there is in the beholder no sense of spiritual values. May it not be rather that the embracer of futility does not believe in spiritual values than that he despairs over a world hopelessly devoted to material values?

ESTHER E. SHAW.

Thoughts, Sentiments, Words

To the Editor of the *Saturday Review*:
SIR:

I read and reread Dr. Canby's essay on style, but despite its charm and literary power, it left me cold and full of doubts. One cannot express thoughts or sentiments one is not conscious of, and there is no true eloquence without great, sublime ideas to inspire it.

Science finds no difficulty in saying all it has to say. When it fails to find needed terms in the Unabridged, it coins them. So does sport, and so does the underworld. If we have no religious or ethical eloquence, the explanation is simple enough—namely, we are not religious, and our ethical notions are based chiefly on horse sense, requiring no eloquence. It is idle to cite the Bible; those who wrote or translated it believed in a personal God, in individual immortality, in salvation by redeemers or Messiahs, in a world governed directly and austerely by a Lord sitting on a heavenly throne.

Such anthropomorphic ideas are childish, of course, and no one who thinks—instead of thinking that he thinks—entertains them. Men of science are Agnostics, or else they use the words God and Religion in a very peculiar sense almost wholly arbitrary. Dr. Whitehead, one of our great *savants*, is an example. Professor Millikan is another. Such men cannot be eloquent. You cannot be majestic, sonorous, eloquent on the subject of an unknowable, inscrutable, and hypothetical power in or behind the relative universe. You cannot worship a force you have no hope of understanding or defining.

In their own way Whitehead and Millikan are quite impressive, for they are sincere and truthful. They have fashioned a religion of their own, and they find comfort in it. To the Agnostic their language is vague, confused, manufactured. But even an Agnostic can be dignified and solemn when dealing with religious and ethical questions. Huxley certainly was.

Men inspired by ideas and sentiments of justice, solidarity, peace, good will, freedom, and tolerance can be and are eloquent even in our scientific and prosaic age. Poets of love and beauty are not complaining of the bankruptcy of language. Read Watson's latest volume of verse, and you will find plenty of moving, stirring, eloquent lines.

Give us ideas and sentiments, and language will know how to give them apt and noble expression.

VICTOR S. YARROS.

Chicago.

American Scholar and Critic

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

I have just noted that Professor Douglas Bush has written an article, "Scholars and Others," *Sewanee Review*, October, 1928, in answer to the article on "The American Scholar" that you, sir, published in *The Saturday Review* last summer. For the most part, naturally, Mr. Bush is apologetic and explanatory, but in one passage he attempts a counter-offensive that may interest your readers.

"One of the commonest topics of professorial talk," he reminds us, "is the feebleness of American reviewing. Between laboriously whimsical chit-chat and amiable log-rolling, independent and intelligent criticism is looked for almost in vain. During the year the literary weeklies canonize book after book, and at the end of the year where are most of them? One expects a critical journal to be critical, to be a responsible leader, not a mirror of the passing show."

In my opinion, this attack is thoroughly just: our feebler journals are in the main stupidly laudatory and our better journals (not so much better) are in the main stupidly open-minded. The best of them, surrendering to the scholar, are more interested in recording than in criticizing. Truly, a critical journal ought to be a responsible leader.

But if I, too, may be apologetic and explanatory, I will venture to assert that the reason the best of the critical journals are not better is, largely, that the scholars, whom one should expect to contribute intelligent, well-informed reviews and critical articles, are for the most part indifferent or hostile to criticism—are, at heart, as idly open-minded and irresponsible as the journals that refuse the task of leadership. Plainly, any American editor who depends mainly on the professors is headed for the rocks. Yet, equally plainly, we shall never have critical journals such as the professors want unless the professors help to steer the ship.

NORMAN FOERSTER.

Sir Walter Scott

To the Editor of *The Saturday Review*:
Sir:

Some time ago you reviewed my book, "The Bibliography of Sir Walter Scott," which was issued last June. Because of my work at this University and my travels around the country I have not had the spare moment to correct some of your errors as a reviewer. First, you say that I base my work on secondary sources; it might please you to know I am very proud of the Scott first editions I possess and I think there are few collectors who have as nearly complete a set as I have in my possession. What preface would you have liked me to give? I got the book up purely as an aid to myself, and it was not till I was persuaded by the publishers, who also collect the gentleman from Abbotsford, that I even gave its publishing a thought.

So you see, my dear sir, I think it is you who did the secondary source and hear-say work.

ALBERT CAPLAN.

Temple University, Philadelphia.

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The New Books

Drama

(*Continued from page 607*)

and the program of the somewhat wandering intrigue includes a Watteau-like fête, given to honor the visiting Marquise de Boufflers. At the end, foreshadowing the catastrophe to come, the son of the house is murdered by a revengeful peasant whose daughter he has seduced. As sheer atmosphere the piece is well enough contrived, but it may be doubted that it would act effectively. Certainly it adds little to the ideas, already well understood, which the distinguished author of "Jean-Christophe" holds in regard to the French Revolution. In fact it only adds to the disquiet with which his admirers have observed the latest phases of the Swiss master's career. His "Théâtre de la Révolution" seems to resemble "Jean-Christophe" solely in the vastness of its conception; the content is unfortunately comparatively small.

THE ART OF PLAY PRODUCTION. By JOHN DOLMAN, JR. Harpers. 1928.

Mr. Dolman's book is more than just another book on play production. This large volume, with copious diagrams, illustrations, and bibliographies, is addressed to the amateur, to the student with a professional aim, and to the teacher. The book is stimulating, for the author has a point of view. All of his information he treats "in terms of artistic principles—to give reason as well as advice." This book is not invested with that child-can-do-it point of view which has made so many recent books on the amateur theatre seem so unnecessary. The author recognizes his job and with thoroughness treats such subjects as theories or production, casting, rehearsing, acting, stage organization, and the development of present-day tendencies of modern scenic art. All of the material is practically arranged and tempered with intelligent theory.

Education

YOUR CHILD TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW. By SIDONIE M. GRUENBERG. Lippincott. 1928. $2.50.

The rising tide of parental desire to know more and more about bringing children up properly, has prompted Mrs. Gruenberg to bring out a third and revised edition of her book, "Your Child To-day and To-morrow." In it she has made use of the great advance in the knowledge of psychology. She has also taken cognizance of the changed home environment, following the war, which demanded a modified technique in handling the child problem.

The book is equipped with an excellent bibliography and is, as are all of Mrs. Gruenberg's discussions, common sense enlightenment for questioning parents.

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE NOVEL. By *Carl H. Grabo*. Scribners. $1.50.

METHODS IN ADULT ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. By *Nina Joy Beglinger*. Scribners. $1.

EXERCISE IN THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF NARRATIVE WRITING. By *Carl H. Grabo*. Scribners. 25 cents.

ENROLLMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES OF THE UNITED STATES. By *Carleton A. Wheeler* and others. Macmillan.

TO COLLEGE TEACHERS OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION. By *Le Baron R. Briggs*. Houghton Mifflin.

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDES. By *E. K. Wickman*. Commonwealth Fund.

MODERN LIFE ARITHMETICS. By *John Guy Fowlkes* and *Thomas Theodore Goff*. Macmillan. Book I, 80 cents. Book II, 76 cents. Book III, 76 cents.

NATIONAL EDUCATION. By *Dupont de Nemours*. University of Delaware Press.

EDUCATIONAL SOCIOLOGY FOR BEGINNERS. By *David Snedden*. Macmillan. $3.50.

BRITISH POETRY AND PROSE. Edited by *Paul Robert Lieder, Robert Morss Lovett*, and *Robert Kilburn Root*. Houghton Mifflin. $4.50.

CHILD NATURE AND NURTURE. According to Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. By *Henry H. Meyer*. Abingdon. $2.50.

HANDY BOOK OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION. By *Ruth M. Whitfield*. Holt.

CHALLENGING ESSAYS IN MODERN THOUGHT. By *Joseph M. Bachelor* and *Ralph L. Henry*. Century. $2.

Fiction

THE HOUNDS OF GOD. By RAFAEL SABATINI. Houghton Mifflin. 1928. $2.50.

This romance offers portraits of Queen Elizabeth and of Philip II, analyses of the bad feeling between England and Spain during their reigns, and lastly and most vividly a remarkable exposition of the spirit and the methods of the Inquisition. Its title comes from the contemptuous epithet hurled at the representatives of the Holy Office by the protagonist of the novel —*Domini Canes*. We see every reason why "The Hounds of God" should be put into the hands of the intellectually curious, no matter whether young or old; no reader can fail to be impressed by the breadth of Mr. Sabatini's knowledge and interests. Nor will more than a few fail to get a new and memorable understanding of those lusty times and their picturesque personages.

Do the general reading public and the more discriminating minority appreciate the excellence of Rafael Sabatini's historical romances? It is to be hoped that they do, but we have our doubts. The *sine qua non* of the historical romance is the necessity for telling a story first and giving information secondarily. Like the competent workman that he is, Mr. Sabatini keeps our interest in the events of the narrative continuously alive; his background of history remains a background, never having the air of being lugged in by the heels. Of course there is a love story in "The Hounds of God"; but it is wholly unobjectionable and largely disciplined to the larger purposes of the novel. Anyone who has not as yet read Sabatini might well take this opportunity of making a most pleasurable beginning.

GRIMHAVEN. By ROBERT JOYCE TASKER. Knopf. 1928. $3.

Robert Joyce Tasker at San Quentin and Ernest Booth at Folsom have now published enough material of distinct literary merit to justify reference to the California Prison School of Literature, tragic as the implications of such a title are. Grimhaven, Mr. Tasker's first book, is the record of his efforts at self-expression in an environment that makes expression imperative to the sensitive creative mind and at the same time denies it. In some of the chapters he strikes major chords of feeling with skill and sincerity; in the last five pages he comes nearer to achieving his ambition to write with distinction than anywhere else in the book.

A few great books have come out of prison. Grimhaven cannot be numbered among them, partly because the author is not yet what he wishes most to be, a truly great writer, and partly because it is difficult for the intellectual in prison to become a "regular con" and to interpret the whole life of the prison as one who has lived it in all its phases. It is, however, better written than many other books produced in recent years by prisoners or ex-prisoners, who represent a field of literature in which men feel much more than they can ever translate into words.

STRICTLY PRIVATE. By DR. MAURICE CHIDECKEL. Stratford. 1928. $2.50.

This purports to be the year's diary of a general practitioner: it is a compilation of medical anecdotes, paraphrased for the laity. Doctor Chideckel is a Baltimore physician who has been at it for twenty years. Some of his scenes from the human comedy are as simple and effective as Sherwood Anderson or Jim Tully: others are too labored. A practical brother-in-law and a sceptical wife form a chorus which is sometimes amusing. One who enjoys this sort of thing should read "Sixpenny Pieces" by A. Neill Lyons.

THE LADY OF STAINLESS RAIMENT. By MATHILDE EIKER. Doubleday, Doran. 1928. $2.50.

Two years ago, when "Over the Boatside" appeared, the question was heard everywhere, "Who is Mathilde Eiker?" It should have been an unnecessary question, but was not. Several years before, an excellent novel, "Mrs. Mason's Daughter," had come out and been practically ignored. Mathilde Eiker was its author; and the few who read it at the time of its publication realized that Miss Eiker must be reckoned with in the field of American fiction. The first novel enjoyed a retroactive success after the appearance and appreciation of the second, and when the third, "The Lady of Stainless Raiment," was announced, Miss Eiker had her audience ready in advance.

The theme of "The Lady of Stainless Raiment" is more circumscribed than those of the two preceding novels, and, as Miss Eiker very completely adapts her style to her subject matter, the style here is a little less flexible than in the other two, but has a sureness and precision which they lacked. The simple clarity and restraint of many passages of "The Lady of Stainless Raiment" might easily permit their being mistaken for translation from the French *genre* novelists. There is a very definite, though slight, pattern in the novel, a pattern most beautifully and exactingly adhered to with the lamentable exception of the conclusion. The almost perfect arc of the relationship between Claudine and her husband is marred by a curlecue at the end.

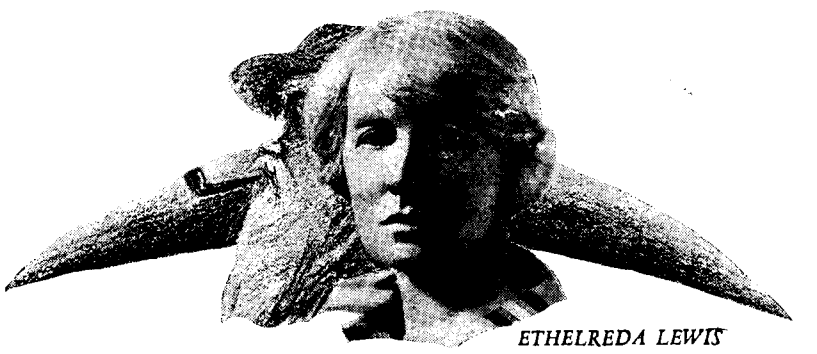
Claudine is the lady whose raiment is kept stainless at bitter cost. She is Southern, and the chivalry which has surrounded her from birth makes two demands of a woman: that she is beautiful; and that she be good. "No man is ever worthy of a Good Woman" is the device born on the masculine banner of Claudia's environment. She acquiesces in the sentiment and surrounds herself with a chilling aura of perfection. From within her safety she exerts her chaste power to bend and break the men who may be of service to her in her creation of a pedestal worthy to support the most exalted being she can conceive of—herself. The petty, the selfish, the unfair means she uses are beyond the comprehension of anyone less "good" than herself.

The portrait of Claudia presented by Miss Eiker is seen through the eyes of Claudia's husband. From information, through confusion, to full and devastating understanding, he pursues his quest of his wife's personality. And here one wishes the story might have ended. But in this Husband's Progress a young girl is with him from time to time, clearing a little more his eyes. And with the promise of a later union of these two, the book ends by opening out where it should have closed in. This is the book of the Lady of Stainless Raiment, and she would never have let so enviable a position as that of the climax slip into the hands of another woman.

FIRE DOWN BELOW. By MARGARET IRWIN. Harcourt, Brace. 1927. $2.50.

The excellences of Margaret Irwin's first novel, "Knock Four Times," reappear and are even more strongly marked in her second, "Fire Down Below." But the same irritating qualities are also present. It is as if the author has not the courage to prune her themes sufficiently. She abounds in ideas and she puts so many into each book that she loses definiteness of impression thereby. After closing her books one is pressed upon by unrealized beginnings that have opened up throughout the story but have been shelved merely for lack of space in one volume. Since the psychological concerns Miss Irwin more than does action, her inclusive tendency peoples her pages with interesting folk, each of whom seems to deserve a book to himself. And they have to blunder through so much unnecessary, and occasionally melodramatic, action to arrive—well, almost nowhere—for Miss Irwin does not see her characters stepping constantly upward upon their dead selves. They are all destined from the beginning, and they muddle on, unable even to shake their selves off, much less step on them. The vigor of characterization and vivid sense of life that filled the first novel (and the eccentric element in the characterization left one uncertain whether Miss Irwin's power might not depend upon the unusual) are heightened in "Fire Down Below," which has swept clear of oddity. The people in these novels are driven by a convincing power so much within them that it is never consciously associated with the author. Sometimes, in fact, she seems almost incapable of dealing with them but hurries along behind them, arranging a scene after they have left it. There is no doubt that they have lives of their own.

With her strong feeling for destiny Margaret Irwin combines a leaning toward the mystical. In "Knock Four Times" a snuff-box played the rôle of the fates, in the present novel a terra cotta figure of Cybele assumes the significance of a person and power. (How lacquerlike and perverse the doll in "Cytherea" grows before the fruitful mystery of this three thousand year old image—each the moving core of a man's life!) There can be no telling of the story of "Fire Down Below." To say that a middle-aged man falls in love with a young girl and, in a moment, is willing to sacrifice a wife and children for her, would be a shoddy inadequacy. It is with gigantic forces caught in pigmy bodies that the book really deals; but the little bodies glow and are alive under the pen of Margaret Irwin.



ETHELREDA LEWIS

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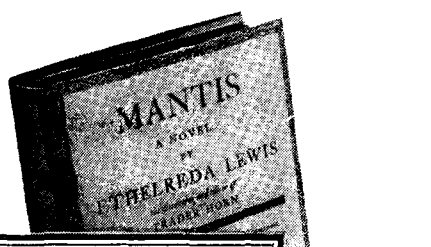
(It is of interest to know that *Mantis* was the novel Mrs. Lewis was working on when Zambesi Jack interrupted her. *Mantis* is ready now!)



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The New Books

Fiction

(*Continued from preceding page*)

enough, and the love stories which are woven in are unfortunately hackneyed, but running beneath the plot there lies a shaft of penetrating sympathy which one rarely meets in modern fiction. And one is further grateful for the fact that each of the central characters is, in her own way, a truly fine person, and not merely a futile shadow.

Poetry

WEST-RUNNING BROOK. By *Robert Frost.* Holt. $2.50.
SELECTED POEMS. By *Robert Frost.* Holt. $2.50.
SILVER SCUTCHEON. By *Mabel Postgate.* Vinal. $2.
POEMS. By *Jan Kochanowski.* University of California Press.
THE COMPLETE POEMS OF ERNEST DOWSON. Medusa Head.
SAPLINGS. Third Series. 1928. Scholastic Publishing Company.
DOLOROUS CARNIVAL. By *John Rollin Stuart.* Vinal.
SOUL SALUTES. By *John Edward Wilson.*
THE BALLAD OF YUKON JAKE. By *Edward E. Paramore, Jr.* Coward-McCann.
THIS MAN'S ARMY. By *John Allan Wyeth.* Vinal. $2.
THE KINGDOM OF TOWERS. By *Allan Dowling.* Vinal. $1.50.
THE METAMORPHOSIS OF AIAX. Edited by *Peter Warlock* and *Jack Lindsay.* London: Fanfrolico Press (McKee).
ORION. By *R. H. Horne.* London: Scholastis Press (McKee).
BLAKE'S POETICAL SKETCHES. London: Scholastis Press (McKee).
THE ISLES OF KHALEDAN. By *Alfred Antoine Furman.* New York: Lathrop C. Harper, 8 West 40th Street.
MY TRUST AND OTHER VERSE. By *Caroline Salome Woodruff.* Rutland, Vt.: Tuttle.
JEPHETHAH. By *John Christopherson.* University of Delaware Press. $2.
HARP STRINGS. By *Isabel Tracy Gaily.* Vinal.
CANDLELIGHT DREAMS. By *Anne Blair.* Vinal.
POEMS. By *Emma Eugenie Goodwin.* Vinal.
THIS UNCHANGING MASK. By *Francis Claiborne Mason.* Yale University Press. $1.25.
THE ANGEL OF THE BATTLEFIELD. By *Anne Kelledy Gilbert.* Vinal. $2.
THE FLIGHT OF GUINEVERE. By *George V. A. McCloskey.* Authors and Publishers Association. $2.
THE OXFORD BOOK OF REGENCY VERSE. Chosen by H. S. Milford. Oxford University Press.
WHITE PEAKS AND GREEN. By *Ethel Romig Fuller.* Willett, Clark & Colby. $2.
LISTEN TO THE MOCKING-BIRD. By *Stoddard King.* Doubleday, Doran. $1.50 net.
COLLECTED POEMS of *Margaret Widdemer.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.
CHRIST IN THE POETRY OF TODAY. Compiled and reassembled by *Elvira Flack* from an Anthology by *Martha Foote Crow.* Woman's Press.
THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL. By *Oscar Wilde.* Illustrated by *Lynd Ward.* Macy-Masius-Vanguard. $4.
SEA SHELLS. By *Burdette K. Marvin.* Vinal.
VOICE AND VISION. By *Jessie A. Ross.* Vinal. $1.50.
COLLECTED POEMS. By *Richard Aldington.* Covici-Friede. $3.
CAWDOR. By *Robinson Jeffers.* Liveright. $2.50.
THOUGHTS OF ARABEL. By *Elizabeth B. Jenkins.* Stratford. 50 cents.
MORNING MOODS. By *Lorna Greene.* Century. $1.75.
AN ANTHOLOGY OF WORLD POETRY. Edited by *Mark Van Doren.* A. & C. Boni. $5.
THE BLACK ROCK. By *John Gould Fletcher.* Macmillan.
HAPPY DAYS. By *Ruth Lewinson.* Vinal.
THE BEST POEMS OF 1928. Selected by *Thomas Moult.* Harcourt, Brace. $2.50.
WINTER WORDS. By *Thomas Hardy.* Macmillan. $2.

Philosophy

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ADOLESCENT. By LETA S. HOLLINGWORTH. Appleton. 1928. $2.50.

This book offers an inadequate treatment of an important topic. It is written on the presumption that recent inquiries are more significant than fundamental ones. It dismisses the important work of Stanley Hall with a mere mention; his book on Adolescence remains far more informative than any casual sketch of all sorts of piecemeal details bearing on the problems of the adolescent. As these newer statements have been repeated a hundred times, there is little purpose in insisting that few persons understand them. It is a pity that an able writer has succeeded only in contributing an additional volume and nothing more, which, though clear and sensible, advances the subject hardly at all.

PLATONISM. By *John Burnet.* University of California Press.
WHAT IS THE MIND? By *George T. W. Patrick.* Macmillan. $2.50.
THE THEORY OF MORALS. By *E. F. Carritt.* Oxford University Press. $1.50.

(*Continued on page 612*)

The Wits' Weekly

Conducted by EDWARD DAVISON

Competition No. 51. A prize of fifteen dollars is offered for the most engaging *original* Valentine for 1929 addressed to the ingenious Editor of this page. (Ent
New York (
Competiti
rhymed poem called "Still Life." (Entries should reach the *Saturday Review* office not later than the morning of January 28.)

Attention is called to the rules printed below. Competitors are specially reminded that they should keep copies of their entries as MS cannot be returned.

THE FORTY-NINTH COMPETITION

The fifteen dollars prize for the best rendering into modern American prose vernacular of Mark Antony's oration from "Julius Cæsar" has been awarded to Homer M. Parsons of San Bernardino, Calif.

THE PRIZE RENDERING
Mark Antony

JUST a minute, there—pipe down, you guys, I wanna put you wise to sump'n! Brutus told me to go ahead and jaw, so I'll spill it. I tell you, we gotta ditch this here stiff, and do it damn' pronto, what I mean. And I'm here to see it's done right.

This fellow Cæsar here's been croaked—and I don't hold no brief for him neither. You heard Brutus tell as how Cæsar was up to some political skullduggery, buyin' nigger delegates, and like o' that. Well, if he did, he's shore cured now. Course, I ain't got no crow to pick with Brutus, for he's on the square, see? But what I mean, this guy Cæsar was white! Why, him and me used to go to school together. Many's the time—

First Citizen

Look, Mark's bawlin'.

Second Citizen

Mebby Cæsar did get a kinda raw deal.

Mark Antony

Pardon me, folks, I didn't mean to break down thattaway. But fact is, I just come f'm the courthouse, and I read Cæsar's will. Now Brutus is on the square, and all that, and I don't want you to do nothin' hasty, but if I had the gift o' gab like him I could give you an earfull 't'd make you itch to string him up. You know Cæsar's big house? He's left that for a free hospital. And there's $25 cash for every man, woman, and child in the county. Do you call that skullduggery?

All

No!

First Citizen

That's what I call doggone white!

Second Citizen

I'll say!

Third Citizen

Where's Brutus at? We ought to lynch him.

Fourth Citizen

Come on, men; let's get Brutus.

Mark Antony

Wait a minute, fellows. Mebby I hadn't ought to mention this, but come up and look. See anything funny about them bullet holes? They's only one kinda gun'll make them holes, and that's Rooshian. Now I ain't sayin' that Brutus and Cassius is Communists nor nothin', but you gotta admit them ain't decent names fra white man.

First Citizen

Seems like I heard they was furriners.

Second Citizen

They're all Reds. Lynch 'em!

Third Citizen

On the square, hell! Tar and feathers!

All

Git a rail! String 'em up! Fetch a rope! Fill 'em full o' buckshot! Head 'em off afore they hit the tracks! (*Exeunt*).

Mark Antony

It shore worked slick, what I mean. That last trick done it. Cæsar, old man, they's hell a-poppin', and I don't mean mebby! Then buzbards'll stretch hemp afore sundown.

HOMER M. PARSONS.

Let me offer belated thanks and good wishes to the many competitors, both new and old, whose entries during the past few weeks have borne Christmas and New Year greetings. These acknowledgements are not so late as they seem. I write in the first week of January although this will not be read until the middle of the month.

Most of the week's entries merely burlesqued the vernacular. I came to the judgment seat fortified and prepared by an enjoyable rereading of H. L. Mencken's "The American Language": but even Mr. Mencken might have been shocked by the extremes to which several competitors went. "You heard Brutus shooting off about Cæsar being a grind, and going in for salve, and wanting to be top key-man, and being a plugger and a whiz. Well, if he was, then yap's the name for him and he's a stiff and a wart."

Perhaps I'm wrong: it may be that they do talk like this on the Arkansas campus whence the entry came. But during three years in America I have never encountered such concentration of the new tongue outside of magazine covers or the vaudeville theatre, excepting perhaps in one or two recent plays in New York. Nevertheless it seemed only fair to consult the opinion of one or two American friends. The result is that Homer Parsons gets the prize instead of David Heathestone, Arjeh, or Marshall M. Brice. Let him thank my wife for her casting vote.

Even the Arkansas contribution, however, was more in the spirit of the contest than a surprising number of translations made in the stiffest kind of high collar English. "Please understand I have not come here to pronounce a eulogy over Cæsar . . . . now ambition may be a very desirable thing, etc." R. H. Rowe's entry would have fallen into this class but for his happy thought in making Anthony say—"You saw me at the Fourth of July barbecue when I offered him the nomination three times. Every time he replied "I do not choose to run. Was that ambition?" Theodore Pratt, who wrote "in the manner of a Broadwayite," rendered the same passage—"I propositioned him three times to stick his name up in lights but he always turned it down." Burns Graham was among the best of several competitors who translated character, occasion, and scene as well as language. His were not the only gunmen of the week. Diamond Tony's speech for his friend, Cæsar Ferraro, began "As youse all know, the bright lights and racketeering lead to Hearst, but the straight and narrow leads to the grave with no sorrowing public."

This same competition was set in the English *Saturday Review* some months ago. The winner did better than ours. But I gather that he was an American.

RULES

Competitors failing to comply with the following rules will be disqualified. Envelopes should be addressed to Edward Davison, *The Saturday Review of Literature*, 25 West 45th Street, New York City. All MSS. must be legible—typewritten if possible—and should bear the name or pseudonym of the author. Competitors may offer more than one entry. MSS. cannot be returned. The Editor's decision is final and *The Saturday Review* reserves the right to print the whole or part of any entry.

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The Reader's Guide

Conducted by MAY LAMBERTON BECKER

Inquiries in regard to the selection of books and questions of like nature should be addressed to MRS. BECKER, c/o *The Saturday Review*.

L. M. J., St. Louis, Mo., says that in my "Adventures in Reading" (Stokes) in the chapter on the delights of raiding the dictionary, I mention Christopher Morley as [illegible]

ON page 566 of the collected "Essays" of Christopher Morley (Doubleday, Doran), in "The Club of Abandoned Men," there is a dialogue between Ajax and Socrates as to founding an establishment to be, in the quaint British phrase, "a home from home" to housebroken husbands with wives in the country;—

SOCRATES: The really crowning touch, I think, would lie in the ice-box raids. A large ice-box would be kept well stocked with remainders of apple pie, macaroni, stewed prunes, and chocolate pudding. Any husband, making a cautious inroad upon these about midnight, would surely have the authentic emotion of being in his own home.

AJAX: an occasional request to empty the ice-box pan would also be an artful echo of domesticity.

E. M., Fairmount, Indiana, adds to the stories of country-school life "Jean Mitchell's School," by Angelina W. Wray, published by Bloomington, Ill., Public School Pub. Co., 1908. He says, "All schoolteachers of Indiana of some twenty years ago are familiar with this book, as it was one of the state institute books for teachers."

L. C., no address, asks for books for "a discouraged woman."

I HAVE more than once refused quite brilliant offers to appear in print as something in the way of a consulting specialist in "mental therapeutic" literature, the while I continue to give by personal letter and, more infrequently, through these columns, advice of this general nature. One reason why I prefer to keep out of print on this subject, even before the friendly audience following this department, is that my recommendations, set down in cold type, often sound not only unconventional but even at times quite frivolous.

For example, in this matter of discouragement, so advanced that an actual breakdown seems impending, it is more than likely that the inquirer, like many who will read this reply, looks forward to receiving a list of inspiring, uplifting, energizing books, such as come at once to the mind of many a grateful reader. But to most people discouragement means that physical and nervous forces have become so depleted that there is all but nothing left in that reservoir of energy from which courage is drawn at need. Let the reservoir alone, and within a reasonable time enough generally gathers to go on with. But a thoroughly discouraged person cannot let it alone: he, and particularly she, worries and thus keeps active a steady and dangerous leakage. It seems reasonable to suggest that the discouraged one first of all "get out of himself" long enough for some energy to trickle in. Almost anything in the reading line sufficiently absorbing to do this—without on the other hand shaking his nervous system apart with shocks and suspense, will be beneficial. A really good detective story will do it, if you like them: "The Prisoner in the Opal," by A. E. W. Mason (Doubleday, Doran) for instance—this is a regular *oner*—or the new one by Austin Freeman, "The Eye of Osiris" (Dodd, Mead), which at last exploits some of the endless fiction material available in and about the British Museum, even [illegible] frequent the depths of [illegible]nfortunately many wo- [illegible]tective stories; there is, [illegible]nd deliberate humor, books that mean to make you laugh or what about it? Here we all have our favorites; Robert Benchley is mine, whether in "Love Conquers All," or "Of All Things," or the new "Ten Thousand Leagues under the Sea or David Copperfield" (Holt), and I won't mention this book again no matter who needs it until some condensation of title makes it possible for this typewriter. Pelham Wodehouse is another man for my money; one of the advantages of living in London is that you get the new Wodehouse some weeks ahead. I read "Money for Nothing" (Doubleday, Doran) last summer, when the weather was perfect and life just grand—it almost seemed too lavish to have it then, with all those months of fog and rain ahead. Stephen Leacock's books undoubtedly helped to win the War. But does it not sound undignified to tell a "discouraged woman" to lay hold upon a Wodehouse, a Benchley, a copy of Tarkington's "Penrod and Sam," or a thumping good detective yarn? The only excuse I can offer for doing so is that it often turns the trick.

At least, the first trick. Then, if I were this client, I would use the energy thus collected to read a few books, preferably by women, about the struggles of people who had a hard time, were thoroughly discouraged—and came through. Mme. Schumann-Heink, for one, reached such a point not only of discouragement but of actual desperation, that she gathered her young family about her one day and set off to take them all with her into the hereafter. If you will read the chapter in which this occurs, in Mary Lawton's "Schumann-Heink, the Last of the Titans" (Macmillan), past the moment when the little daughter looks up into her mother's face and asks the question that saves the family's lives, you will see that it is possible to get pretty far down and yet climb up again. The whole book is invigorating. I wish girls would read it who feel put upon because they do not play leads the first season out of dramatic school. Though I admit that the circumstances under which the opera-singer occupied an upper berth on an ocean voyage, here set down, raised in me such a righteous rage as will, I doubt not, be shared by many American women.

Or take the life of Mrs. Thomas Whiffen, as recorded in her autobiography, "Keeping off the Shelf" (Dutton). If discouragement comes from the calendar—which may be a dampener now and again—this book may shame one into a better temper. In general, the memoirs of actresses are good against superannuation. How the profession does develop not only durability of body but agility of mind!

Committed as I am to the policy of telling the truth in a biography or letting it alone, I yet rather resent the later lives of Stevenson, even that of Mr. Steuart (Little, Brown), which have elbowed aside the family portrait produced for the family by Mr. Balfour. For this book has been for me for years a sort of spring-board out of depression; Stevenson certainly knew the trick of keeping the banner flying. Nothing that has since "come out" has changed the fact that he did, but in the Balfour life one realizes it more sharply. In like manner, though, Ralph Straus's new biography, "Charles Dickens," is immensely interesting and an invaluable supplement to Forster's, its very virtues make it less bouncing than Chesterton's story of Dickens's life. For that matter, one of the best books for boosting the spirit into action is Dickens's own "Christmas Carol," especially the appearance of the ghosts chained to the strong-boxes.

There is, however, one easily obtainable work that comes near to being the ideal literary treatment for discouragement; this is the Psalms. A large proportion of them are apparently the result of profound and justifiable discouragement, out of which the author gloriously sings himself as the poem progresses. If in the process he sometimes uses strong language about his enemies, there are times when this affords a reader release from some of his linguistic inhibitions. But the deeper reason for their value in cases like this is in the lift of the spirit out of itself into the eternal. When all torches burnt black for Emile Verhaeren, and one of the worst nervous breakdowns in literature was writing itself out in poetry, he marked the moment when he touched bottom and began the upward climb with the realization that

A Coward was I; I hid my head
Beneath a huge and futile Me.

Anything is good for discouragement that can pry the spirit out from under this weight. Once out, there is a chance that it may be caught up, if for an instant only, into something greater than itself. After that, it is even possible that the patient may come to realize that, in the words of the authority above-quoted, "a joyful and pleasant thing it is to be thankful." Gratitude is so delightful and so invigorating a sensation that it is worth cultivating. But I would never expect a worn-out nervous system to reach this point at one jump. For this reason I suggest, with all imaginable diffidence and humility, some of the preliminary exercises here tentatively indicated.

H. P. Cooper, A. and M. College, Mississippi, sends this information to the club (and the school) making a special study of China.

"YOUR ladies in New Jersey, if they are interested in China, will be missing the treat of their lives unless they "read after" (as our local Senegambian idiom has it) Bland and Backhouse—especially 'China under the Empress Dowager' and 'Annals and Memoirs of the Court of Peking,' published in London by Heinemann and in this country by I-don't-know-who, just before the war. The former was 'compiled from State papers and the private diary of the Comptroller of her household,' and the latter, dealing with more ancient as well as recent events, especially the Boxer troubles, is also filled with translations of Chinese diaries and letters. Aside from the unforgettable and tinglingly edifying impression they give of the Old Buddha, the insight they give into the workings of the Chinese mind make them memorable. And really, it is to obtain even a faint hint of that insight that one reads about China, rather than to find out how things are over there now. I always think that to learn how, for instance, one behaves to a mother-in-law, or interviews an official, or pays a call, is far more valuable (and Lord knows how much more entertaining!) than to try to learn somewhat about conditions that are notoriously chaotic—so much so that not even our omniscient Mr. Wells has yet undertaken their elucidation.

"There are also Homer Lea's books—but these are perhaps not 'new titles.' And unless the ladies are a band of Really Serious Thinkers, such fiction as 'The Inconstancy of Madame Chuang,' translated by E. B. Howell from a well-known tenth-century collection (Stokes); or Ernest Bramah's delectable tales of Kai Lung; or even the novels of Georges Soulié de Morant, or Judith Gauthier's play, 'La Fille du Ciel.'

"By the way, I think you would be vastly entertained by a book in the World's Manuals Series of the Oxford University Press, 'Sound and Symbol in Chinese,' translated from the Swedish of B. Karlgren. It discusses unpedantically, with a wealth of illustrations, the picturesqueness (in every sense) of the Chinese language. If the learned ladies read Spanish, a new novel by Luis Orteza, 'Diablo Blanco,' on the Chinese Civil War, is what my Freshmen would call a 'whizz.' It is rather Grand Guignol, in other words."

"Read it to compose your mind at night and to arouse it in the morning,"

says

JOHN DEWEY,
Columbia University

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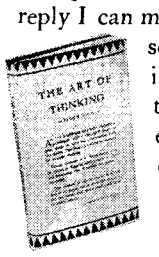

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The New Books

Religion

(*Continued from page 610*)

THE MASTER: A LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST. By WALTER RUSSELL BOWIE. Scribners. 1928. $2.50.

The Rector of Grace Church, New York City, has made a painstaking attempt to write another life of Christ. His book is a combination of the sort of scholarship which a student gets secondhand from masters of criticism, and a not particularly novel homiletic interpretation. The style is boyish, with much of the charm which goes with adolescence, a charm which one hardly can accept as the equivalent of that maturity of expression which is properly expected from middle-age. The Christology of this book seems quite definitely Unitarian, although the author carefully refrains from using unmistakably Unitarian terminology. Arius would find it more to his taste than Athanasius.

CATHOLICISM AND THE MODERN MIND. By MICHAEL WILLIAMS. Dial. 1928. $3.50.

Under this somewhat too ambitious title have been collected a number of the best essays written by the able editor of the *Commonweal*. Mr. Williams has a considerable popularity at the moment, some of which comes from real worth as a Catholic journalist and much of which is due to his not having much competition in that field. He is to be thanked for having provided us with at least some faint American echo of that group of aggressive and highly modern European apologists for the Roman see which includes men like Belloc and W. Lewis and Shuler and Bramond. Not that Mr. Williams is quite in their class. He has no such illusions about himself, and it is hardly fair to him to have his ardent admirers hailing him as more than he is. He remains a witty and intensely Catholic journalist. One thanks God for his fire, his cleverness, his courage. We could stand a good deal more of this sort of religious journalism without any loud complaint.

He says much in the present volume about Catholicism, but very little about the modern mind. After a while the reader perceives that the author more than suspects that there is no such animal. That does not seem quite fair, somehow. Of course the "religion of science" chatter all about us does indicate at least sluggish mentality, but there are thoughtful opponents of a Catholic philosophy in the modern world, and they are not as wholly negligible as our author would have us think. Nor is it wise deliberately to blind one's self, as Mr. Williams seems to do, in "Should a Catholic be President?" to the fact that morals does include politics and that an infallible moral teacher is bound to claim to be, in times of certain crises at least, an infallible political teacher. Mr. Williams does not always bother himself to discover exactly what are his opponents' contentions.

But, despite these occasionally glaring reversions into journalistic evils, these papers are great fun, and are provocative of thought. It is good to see him burn up in scorn those anthropologists, whose pretentious posings inspired G. K. C's "Everlasting Man," in a ribald Chapter called "Professor Cock-eye." His "Prayer for Mr. Mencken," with its recommendation of that gentleman to the intercessions of St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and Blessed Robert Bellarmine, is not to be missed. It is enjoyable to listen to his reactions to Professor Babbitt and Lewis Mumford and Albert Nock and P. E. More —*not to speak of Sinclair Lewis and Mr.* Nathan. Here are lots of fireworks, and some few things more beautiful than fireworks.

The book was "compiled" in a trappist monastery, whither the author went, with a typewriting machine, to spend Holy Week. Most astonishing! Possibly the fathers may have felt like saying to him, as this reviewer does, "you have quoted to Mr. Mencken two mottoes of St. Francis de Sales which you might yourself ponder with profit: *If we must fall into some excess, let it be on the side of gentleness; and what is good makes no noise, noise does no good.*" An "army with banners" is more than a campaign procession.

Travel

THE WORLD ON ONE LEG. By ELLERY WALTER. Putnams. 1928. $5.

A book of this character is usually regarded as something exempt from criticism, like Cæsar's wife and the performers at a benefit concert. It is all the more pleasant to report, therefore, that young Mr. Ellery has made his chronicle of a game fight against heavy odds an extremely interesting one. He has no need to claim any extra degree of indulgence for his misfortunes. They are scarcely mentioned up to the twelfth chapter, when he goes to the hospital with an infected heel, which was brought about by overwork and a towering ambition to make Rusty Callow's crew at the University of Washington. His previous ventures had included some narrow squeaks among irascible Mexicans, and with some playful fish canners whose gentle idea of hazing was to hold him under ice-cold water until he had blown forty bubbles. His none too complete convalescence took him to Hawaii, Australia, Egypt, Italy (where he said "Howdy" in so many words to Mussolini), France, and New York, where he landed with forty-five cents in his pocket and went straight to a publisher, his own Johnson to his own Goldsmith.

THE MAGIC ISLAND. By *W. B. Seabrook*. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

THE LAND THAT IS DESOLATE. By *Sir Frederick Treves*. Dutton. $4.

THE PEOPLE OF TIBET. By *Sir Charles Bell*. Oxford University Press. $7.

CIRCLING SOUTH AMERICA. By *Isabel Anderson*. Marshall Jones. $4.

BALTIMORE: A NOT TOO SERIOUS HISTORY. By *Letitia Stockett*. Baltimore: Norman, Remington. $12.50.

A GLIMPSE OF GREECE. By *Edward Hutton*. Macmillan.

REBECCA WEST, one of the contributors to "BOOKS"

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A New Aladdin

THE STORY OF ALADDIN AND THE WONDERFUL LAMP. By JOHN KETTELWELL. Illustrated by the author. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1928.

TO one who has been long pent within the rigid confines of puritanic literature, it is electrifying to look into the fair and open pages of that treasure house of story, the Arabian Nights. It may well be, as Burton points out in one of his notes, that the life depicted in the Nights is that of a particular time in the life of a race, and not peculiar to the Arab. But there is something about the spontaneity of the stories, the rich humor and the fundamental absurdity of the situations, which makes them immortal. That their raciness and virility is not for our time—not yet, anyway—*is no* reflection on them, but our incomparable loss.

The story of Aladdin and his lamp possesses the spontaneity and the humor without those elements which—fundamental as they are—still divert complete editions of the Nights into that most curious of classifications, the Curiosa. It has been retold many times, so that a fresh reaction must have something to offer of fresh interest. And the present book is admirable because while holding close to the original it does have something of freshness about it—does in fact carry on to the reader much of the robustiousness of the tale.

Mr. Kettelwell's phraseology and nomenclature stick close to Burton: his prose style is just sufficiently grotesque to sound as if it belonged to the bedroom of Shariar —and that is the way it should sound. At the same time it does not attempt to be old-fashioned, for in general it is told in idiomatic prose. The slight expurgations are in no way serious; in fact, one wonders just why it was necessary to expurgate at all.

Mr. Hugh Walpole has contributed, or, as seems more likely, has been drafted into *preparing an Introduction which consists* mainly in explaining the ineptitude of introductions. It all seems too much like an attempt to boost a book which could do very well on its own merits. For the rest of the introduction Mr. Walpole calls rather fervid attention to Mr. Kettelwell's illustrations. That they are Aubrey Beardsley brought down to date seems to me rather faint praise. They, too, might be left to tell their own story, which they can do admirably. They are imaginative, with much good drawing in them, and when kept simple, like the tail-piece on page 89, are very much alive.

The format of the book is very good indeed, in spite of an ineffectual title-page. (A title-page ought really to be on better terms with the text pages it ushers in!) The text is set in that well-drawn type-face known as Poliphilus, of ample size, and the smooth, cream-colored paper happens happily to hit the mark of the occasion. The binding, in figured cloth, adds to the effect of a well planned book. It is a genuine pleasure to suggest that here is a book which is a thoroughly creditable housing of a good story.

R.

A Shelf of Various Items

THE "List of Members" of the American Institute of Graphic Arts is just at hand, a typographic blend of modernism and good composition. The Institute is the foremost organization in America devoted to the graphic arts, with a wide and representative membership among printers, book collectors, and advertisers. Incidentally its "Keepsakes," of which there have now been issued thirty-three, possess considerable interest for the collector.

Two Charming Small Books

FROM the Harbor Press I have received two small volumes which show good planning and execution. "Extracts from the Diary of Roger Payne" is a *jeu d'esprit* of which its printers say, "its charm is as authentic as its truth is dubious." With such a warning one may read it with delight, the more so as the type is large, the paper fine, and the binding appropriate. Of "Narcissus," three poems by Louis How, one may commend the delicacy of the format, but may especially call attention to the drawings by W. D. Teague, reproduced in color. Such work has been done before, and mostly in France, to be sure; heaven forbid that I should hail anything as new. But they—the illustrations—are good to look at, and considerably beyond what the American publisher thinks his customers want. Perhaps there is hope for the illustrated book in America yet! These two Harbor Press books are worth having.

The Bremer Press, Munich

BEGINNING in 1912, this press has issued a number of publications, printed by hand in limited editions, from private types designed by one of the founders of the Press, Dr. W. Wiegand. A recent announcement of the Press lists twenty-two titles, the latest being Luther's German Bible in five volumes, in a new black letter font. German skill in using type itself as the decorative element in books, aided as it is by the apparent cheapness and facility with which new type faces may be cut and cast in Germany, is exemplified by the work of the Bremer Press. Its types are legible and in the tendency of modern type design of the better sort to adhere to calligraphic models.

Hand-Press Printing

EVER since the complete mechanization of American printing-offices became a practical probability it has seemed as if the older, simpler, and frequently cheaper methods would die out. As has been said, the machine can do anything—except produce a work of art. So insidious is the machine that its product is almost accepted as "art" by virtue of its very mechanical perfection. The setting of type by hand, save for the smaller editions of commercial forms, has given place to the mechanical setting of type; and the hand-press, even for proofs, is almost absolete. And yet, in the hands of competent workmen, hand-set type (for reasons heretofore advanced in these columns) is superior to machine-set, and if hand-printing is not superior to power printing, it is still true that the slow, individualistic methods of hand-printing, whether a hand-press is used or not, do provide superior work.

These remarks are brought forth by the increasing use of hand processes by individuals who resent the high cost, both in money and organization, of the completely mechanized printing-office, and who desire to work along individual lines. There are to-day a dozen or so hand-presses at work in this country. The output is small, and the quality usually not very high, due to the lack of technical experience, difficulty in securing satisfactory inks, and the psychological predominance of "Fordism." What one eagerly hopes for is a modest revival of the simpler ways of printing, not because such a revival means "progress," but because it means that the human equation is not to be completely submerged in the triumph of machine production.

That the product of the hand-presses is very far from perfect is easily provable. Such perfection as Mr. Garnett achieves at Pittsburgh is sufficient to show what may be done with the simpler methods. What does matter, however, even more than perfection, at the moment, is the spirit which prompts an occasional worker to adopt the older practices. The limited edition of Mr. McCarthy's "*Goldsmith* Catalogue" is a fine case in point. The thin booklet entitled "Poker," printed by Mr. Carl I. Wheat at his "Wheatstalk Press" in Palo Alto, is another—not very well done as modern standards go, but after all an evidence of the revolt of the worker in the handicrafts against the spiritual domination of the machine.

It is to be hoped that these individual presses will increase, that more and more men will realize that a few fonts of type and a hand-press are relatively inexpensive playthings.

R.

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German History of Printing

UNDER the title of "Geschichte der Buchdruckerkunst" the publishing house of Demeter in Hellerau near Dresden is issuing a notable history of printing from Gutenberg to the present day. The text is by G. A. E. Bogeng, and the work is appearing in thirty parts, five having already been issued. The text is set as a large folio, in Poliphilus type, and with the utmost severity in design. In fact there are no headings or other paraphernalia in any of the parts issued so far. Presumably an adequate index will make the book workable for reference. This omission of the usual ornaments of book-making serves, however, to emphasize the illustrative features. Besides many reproductions of line blocks in the text, there are very finely printed heliotype reproductions of printed pages, in one, two, and three colors, that method of reproduction allowing the margins to be shown. The printing of the book is very well done indeed, and the heliotypes are quite up to the usual German standard.

Comment on the text can well be reserved for the completion of this monumental work, but so far the treatment seems adequate if not inspired. We shall look forward with interest to the completed book, because a definitive history of printing is very much needed, and if this proves as important as it appears now, it should be translated into English and published with the German illustrations. R.

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"Who is this ETHELREDA LEWIS?" asked FRANKLIN PIERCE ADAMS in an outburst of admiration for the introductory conversations of the first *Trader Horn* book. "Can't we find out more about her, and get more of her own writing?"

Partly to accommodate a neighboring columnist, but chiefly to introduce to America a novelist already distinguished in her own right on two other continents, *The Inner Sanctum* publishes this week a novel by ETHELREDA LEWIS entitled *Mantis*.

If curious readers want to find out the meaning of the word "Mantis", it will cost them $2.50 at virtually all bookstores.

But *The Inner Sanctum* feels justified in conceding here, without charge, that *Mantis* treats of love among the explorers in South Africa. It was on chapter fourteen of this book, in fact, that ETHELREDA LEWIS was working when a bearded hawker of gridirons sauntered up to her door . . . .

Mantis has already been published in England and won the acclaim of such diverse publications as *Punch* [which compares it, favorably, with JOSEPH CONRAD], *The London Post*, and the most lordly critical autocrat of them all, *The Literary Supplement* of *The London Times*.

Before the drumfire begins in America, *The Inner Sanctum* confidently repeats the slogan of the Northwest Mounted Police: "GET YOUR *Mantis!*"

Another new book published this week by *The Inner Sanctum* is *Phantom In The Wine*, a novel of gipsy fires, cossack cavaliers and snowy splendors, by MICHAELINA MARFA-MOYA NAMOVICH, only daughter of BARON MICHAEL KASSIMIR-NAMOVICH of old St. Petersburg.

Booksellers know the author by her American name: JEAN STARK.

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THE PHOENIX NEST

A SMALL book we have recently found stimulating is "A Pamphlet Against Anthologies," by *Laura Riding* and *Robert Graves*, published over here by Doubleday, Doran. It contains many amusing remarks, though we ourselves cannot deplore anthologies as do these two earnest and convinced collaborators. There is a slight slip on page 81, probably due to the mental weariness induced by coming across the same poem embalmed in anthology after anthology. Yet on page 80 the authors have waxed rather superior concerning their knowledge of the original version of "Annie Laurie" as opposed to the version that everyone sings all over the globe. We have therefore the less compunction for picking them up on a peccadillo.

If you ask him (they say) who wrote 'God's in His Heaven, all's well with the world'—

Well, we ourselves wouldn't know who wrote that. We know that *Browning* wrote "God's in his heaven,—all's right with the world."

In their chapter, "The Perfect Modern Lyric" Miss Riding & Mr. Graves expend much vigor in picking to pieces certain delightful poems and showing just how silly and badly-written they think them. They have their whack at *Yeats*, *Bridges*, *Masefield*, *de la Mare*, *Hodgson*, and others, concerning poems certainly not of the respective authors' very best, but poems, nevertheless that have always given us, and continue to give, much pleasure. They endeavor by this analysis to define the ideal anthology-poem. But in spite of their entertaining reference to "the 'simple village maiden' of the ballad," with respect to poems that "lose their name" again and again, by appearing in successive anthologies, we cannot see that a poem of certain merits does not remain a poem of certain merits, whether it become a household word or remain a solace to but a few truly discriminating souls, as they may consider themselves. This opens the ancient wide range of debate, ground trampled enough by warfare. But we seem to detect a certain snobbery in the attitude of these collaborators, for all their wit and intelligence. One does get frightfully tired of anthologies, of "predigested poetry," of the well-worn "great examples," true!—yet many people, and some of them "better men than we, my boy," have made a first acquaintance with "noble numbers" in the pages of anthologies. Certainly the general public should not depend solely upon anthologies for an education concerning poetry. They should go to the originals. But no reasonable anthology pretends to be much more than either a casual arrangement according to personal taste or a mere lodge at the gates of the great estates of poetry. That there have been far too many anthologies covering the same ground again and again, none would deny. No obligation is, however, laid upon one to read them all. . . .

Gilbert Cannan, who not so long ago was considered one of the rising young British realists, is by now—how tempus does fugit!—the father of a new novelist, *Joanna Cannan*, whose "Sheila Both-Ways" is to be published in March by Stokes. . . .

Major Percival Christopher Wren has at length run out of titles containing the word "Beau" for his widely popular "Geste" novels. The fourth one, slated for February by Stokes, is called "Good Gestes." Well, we had a suggestion to make, useless now,—we thought of timidly offering the appelation, "Yeay, Beau!" . . .

Claude McKay, the negro poet and novelist, having finished the work of fiction which will succeed "Home to Harlem" was lately in Fez (which he thought resembled Moscow somewhat), went thence to Marrahesh, and intends later to make a trip to West Africa. His new book is called "Banjo," and ought to be out in March. . .

A new narrative poem by *Edwin Arlington Robinson*, "Cavender's House," is on Macmillan's list for the Spring. . . .

We have heard excellent things of *Siegfried Sassoon's* "Memoirs of a Fox Hunting Man," published by Coward-McCann, and of *Bill Seabrook's* "The Magic Island" (of course the latter is a Literary Guild choice) published by Harcourt, Brace. . . .

Seabrook's description of the Voodoo rites in Haiti is powerful and vivid. His book makes a splendid beginning. Toward the end our interest fell away, after he left Voodoo and turned to other matters. But his description of the Marine who has been crowned king of an island near Haiti is a striking picture. . . .

Recently we spent the evening with *Sinclair Lewis*, now for a while in New York. *Lewis Browne* who was present, and is, by the way, still a rabbi, told some entertaining stories. Later in the evening *Harrison Smith* of the new firm of Jonathan Cape & Harrison Smith, Inc., came in and discussed with enthusiasm the quarters of their organization at 139 East 46th Street. As for Lewis, he was pretty wearied out by reading for the press the last pages of his latest novel, "Dodsworth," but despite that was wholly the benevolent host. . . .

W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., recently announced the extension of their activities to a limited list of novels. Their initial publications of this sort will be two American first novels, "These Are My Jewels," by *L. B. Campbell* and "Let Tomorrow Come," by *A. J. Barr*. . . .

Again we thank our missionary friend, the *Reverend H. G. C. Hallock*, for a Merry Christmas greeting from Shanghai inclosing a poster of a Chinese King, Ming Wong, with the priest his guide at the mythical Yuih-Koong or Moon Castle. This will form a companion-piece over our desk for a poster of the Chinese god of War which he sent us earlier. . . .

We surrender to *G. W. Page* of Los Angeles, California, who takes us to task for spelling "lavender" with an *a*, as "lavendar." "Don't shoot, Dan'l, we'll come down!" . . . .

Opportunity's retrospective review of negro accomplishments in literature in America during the past year, printed in their January issue, is both interesting and valuable. . . .

Palms, a poetry magazine to which we have often referred, published by *Idella Purnell* in Guadalajara, Mexico, some time ago announced a prize of one thousand dollars, to be awarded the best poem by a subscriber, the contest closing on January twentieth. That struck us as a really generous award! . . .

"An Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry," (Miss Riding and Mr. Graves please note!) will be published on the first of February by a committee of which *Henry Reich, Jr.* is chairman. *Marcus Graham* is the compiler and editor. He has brought together nearly four hundred poems in a book which also includes translations from fifteen languages. The first edition is limited, $2 per copy for the regular cloth-bound edition and $4 for the de luxe edition. All money orders, drafts, or cheques should be made payable to the treasurer of the Committee: *Nicholas Moskowitz*, Box 3, West Farms Station, N. Y. . . . .

We are treasuring a cheque for fifty five cents sent us by *Lawrence B. Smith* of Osage, Iowa, to buy ourselves some English Ovals. He is an English Oval alumnus, it seems. Well, cheerio, Philip Morris & Company, Ltd.,—what do we get for the ad? . . . .

The Viking Press has removed from 30 Irving Place to 18 East 48th Street, into larger quarters. In February they're bringing out several new "*Saki*" volumes, "The True Heart," by *Sylvia Townsend Warner*, and an American first novel by one *Jonathan Leonard*. . . .

In the January *Bookman*, *Rebecca West* points out that the character of *Meyer Wolfsheim* in "The Great Gatsby" by *F. Scott Fitzgerald*, was evidently inspired by *Arnold Rothstein*, the gambler recently killed in the Park Central. . . .

The "Private Papers of *James Boswell*," a new discovery, are now being printed in several handsome volumes, planned and designed by *Bruce Rogers* and published in a limited elition by *William Edwin Rudge* of 475 Fifth Avenue. The first volume is now ready for delivery. Subscriptions to the set are being entered rapidly; only 570 sets are to be printed. Full particulars and a prospectus describing the books will be sent on request by Mr. Rudge. . . .

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Some Folklore Tales

Reviewed by MARGERY WILLIAMS BIANCO

THIS season's list of folklore stories includes a number of interesting things. Some of the tales are new, others cover already familiar ground, but acquire freshness from the manner of their telling. "The Little People of the Hills," by Florence Choate and Elizabeth Curtiss (Harcourt, Brace, $2.50), is a remarkably well-chosen collection of Welsh and Irish folkstories, with a few from the German and Scandinavian, dealing with gnomes, pixies, and household brownies, the "little people" who used to pester the niggardly farmer and help the housewife with her chores in return for a nightly bowl of milk and porridge. These are the kind of tales to appeal much to a child's imagination with their homely settings and suggestion of reality, seeming to come straight from the farmhouse chimney corner and told with the right touch of credulity and humor. They are all genuine tales from authentic sources and I can imagine no more attractive introduction to Celtic folklore. In "The Jolly Old Whistle" (Nelson, $2), Herschel Williams has brought together a score of tales from as many countries. Each has been chosen as essentially characteristic of its kind, giving a varied range, and the style adapts them well for reading aloud. Attempts to present the very involved mythology and legends of Lapland and Finland in a form simple enough for child readers have usually failed through over-conscientiousness on the part of the translator. There is a remoteness about these tales which, with their strongly rhetorical quality, makes them very difficult to render with any spontaneity in English prose. Frances Jenkins Olcott has done good work in her "Wonder Tales from the Baltic Wizards" (Longmans, Green, $2) in putting some of these stories into a simpler form. The book includes some new and very charming folktales, and the brief dictionary and history at the end will help much to understanding of the tales and their origin. In his preface to "Other Arabian Nights" (Scribner, $2), H. I. Katibah tells how he first heard these and other Eastern tales as a small boy in a missionary boarding-school in Damascus, from the lips of a very gifted story-teller. To have heard them under such conditions is a rare privilege, and readers will be grateful for the magic of this childhood memory which one feels has helped much towards the perfection of their retelling. These stories are related by Mr. Katibah now in English just as they were originally told in Arabic, and the result is something as near to the true Eastern fairytale in color and atmosphere as it is possible to get in English. They come from that vast storehouse of Arabic popular tales of which the familiar Arabian Nights is only another portion.

"The Jolly Tailor," by Lucia Merecka Borski and Kate B. Miller (Longmans, Green, $2), is a collection of Polish tales full of action and whimsicality that children will thoroughly enjoy. They are quaint and lively and have all stood the test of telling aloud both in Polish and English. From the same publishers comes "Castles in Spain," by Bertha L. Gunterman, with illustrations by Mahlon Blake. These are unusual stories, representative of the best in Spanish romance and popular tradition, full of color and poetry. It is a pleasure to come upon tales as fine and free in spirit. "A Jackal in Persia" (Doubleday, Doran, $2), an adaptation of an old Persian classic based upon still earlier Sanscrit fables, sounds very learned and is really very amusing, the stories being nearly all about animals. It might be described as an Eastern "Reynard the Fox," except that whereas Reynard is a satire in which the animals are invested with the meaner qualities of mankind under the social state, the beasts and birds here are in their native character, only with an added mantle of Eastern dignity and nobility, and uphold in a delightfully solemn manner the natural judgment, intelligence, and rectitude of the animal world. The extravagant mouse, the pigeon, the tortoise, Shan the bull, and many others figure in these tales, interwoven story within story in the Persian form, which Major Mackenzie has simplified just sufficiently for easy enjoyment. There are delightful and distinctive drawings by Baroness Dombrowski which add much to the solemn humor of the tales. A first rate volume of animal stories for somewhat younger readers is "Why So Stories," by Edwin Gile Rich (Little, Brown, $2), with illustrations by Charles Copeland. These are adapted primitive legends and folktales from various sources, many of American Indian origin, all about different birds and animals and how they came to acquire their particular characteristics. They are true tales in that they are based upon natural facts and the attempts of primitive man to explain them, the kind of story most small children will far prefer to the usual fairytale and that will directly stimulate both imagination and observation. They are logical and amusing and of just the right length to read aloud.

"Tricks of Women, and Other Albanian Tales," translated by Paul Fenimore Cooper (Morrow, $4) does not belong altogether in the children's bookshelf. It does certainly belong, however, in the personal shelf of treasured books, as a joy both for the stories themselves and as an example of beautiful book production. These are primitive tales full of ancient wisdom, irony, and humor; genuine tales of the people, of the source of all literature; stories, as Burton Rascoe says in his preface, "straight from the soul of a people whose literary art is instinctive." High compliment is due to Mr. Cooper, who collected and translated these tales, to Ilse M. Bischoff for the very beautiful woodcuts accompanying them, and to whoever is responsible for the final shaping of the book.

Eva March Tappan's translation of Richard Bergstrom's stories, "The Prince from Nowhere" (Houghton Mifflin, $1.75) is a welcome addition to her other volumes of Swedish tales. Some of them are variants of old favorites, like the Cinderella story and the Three Guesses, but with new setting and detail; others will be entirely new to American readers. She has translated perfectly the spirit of the tales, with the sure touch that keeps them throughout intimate and lifelike.

In conclusion it would be hard to find two books more in contrast to one another than "The Feast of Noel" (Macmillan, $1.50) and Erick Berry's "Black Folk Tales" (Harper, $2), one full of the highly traditional atmosphere of Provence, the other straight from the heart of West Africa. Gertrude Crownfield's little tales, based on the time-honored Adoration of the Shepherds, a Fête which still takes place yearly in Provence, are like a set of tiny pictures, naïve and tender, real *saintes images* reflecting the simple mysticism which is the childhood essence of Christmas, and the illustrations by Mary Lott Seaman have caught perfectly their spirit of simplicity and somewhat archaic charm. The African folktales take one straight back into a primitive world, where all values are different, where man somehow loses his importance and becomes only a part of creation instead of its leading spirit. In these tales we are made to feel not only the dominant strength and independent intelligence of the animal kingdom, but the far more sinister pressure of vegetable life, too. No tale of wizardry, for instance, can give the sinister thrill induced by the wild pumpkin that takes to following the girl about everywhere, saying: "Meat I must eat, Fatilla; meat I must eat!" It is the feeling of magic gone of a sudden uncomfortably wrong and acting on its own initiative instead of according to rule. In this particular case the pumpkin turns finally into a princely suitor, but in other tribal tales it remains a figure of grim menace and evil. The elephant is the rather fatherly embodiment of counsel as well as strength; the spider is frequently the villian, but stands also for wisdom and cunning applied to good as well as bad ends. These tales have power, beauty, and a strange authority. They are tales reduced to their essentials through repeated telling, and Miss Berry has finely preserved their starkness and clarity in her translation. Children will enjoy them for their freshness, movement and thrill of an unfamiliar life, and they will like the vigorous and characteristic drawings that accompany them. The book is well and appropriately produced, and if the title page somewhat recalls Payson & Clarke's earlier production of the Cendrars African Saga it loses nothing thereby in effectiveness.

Reviews

A NURSERY GARLAND, woven by KITTY CHEATHAM, pictured by GRAHAM ROBERTSON. New York: G. Schirmer, Inc. 1928. $3.50.

Reviewed by DAVID STANLEY SMITH

Dean, Yale Music School

ALL parents know that predicting the vagaries of a child's taste in music or verse is a guessing game. They see their children shout with glee over one poem and pass by another of the same sort and excellence. A reviewer of a collection of nursery songs would, therefore, best regard the children as an uncertain quantity and speak only as—a reviewer.

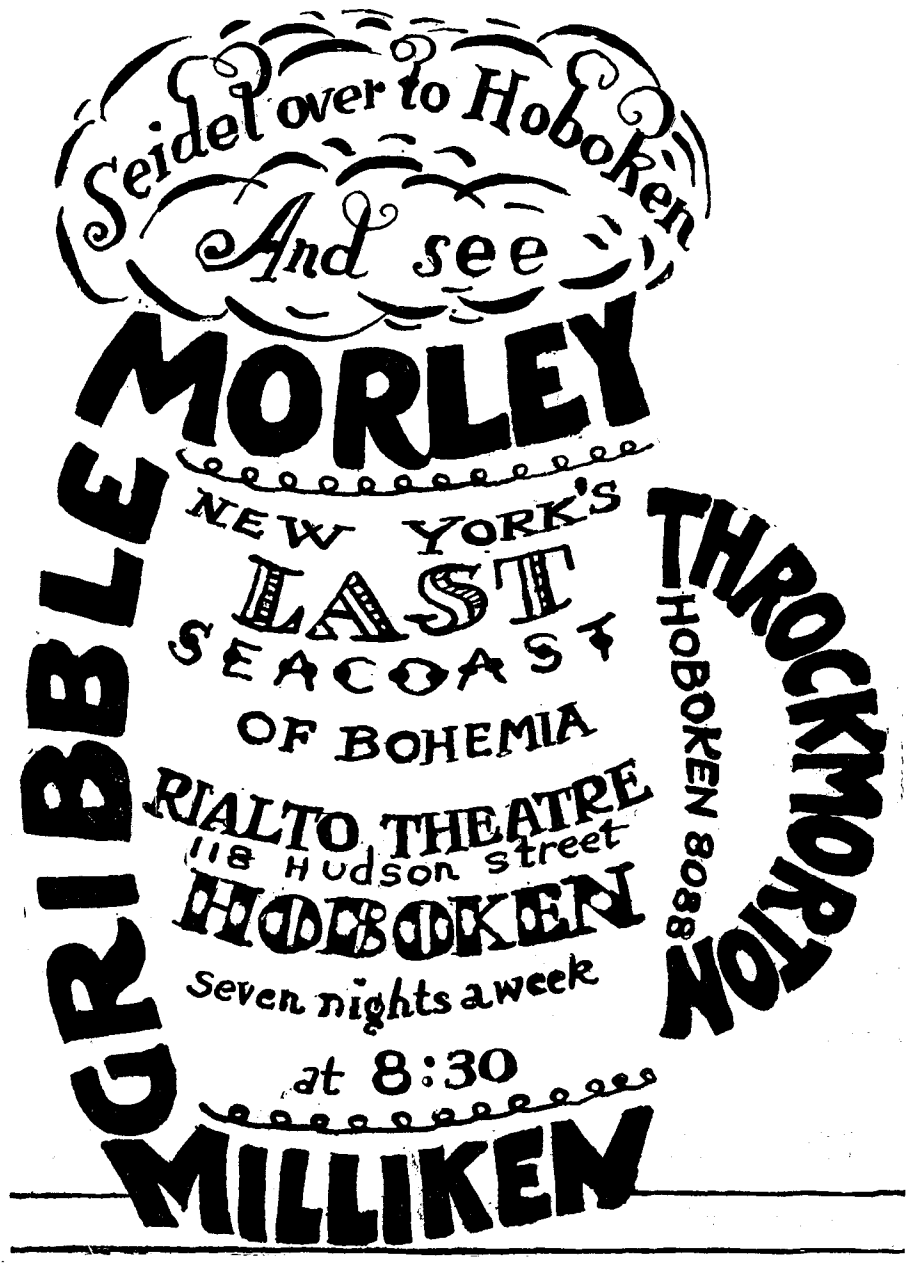
Miss Cheatham's book is well planned and edited. The music is free from cheapness, and is far superior to the harmful imitations of the low-grade popular song that ring in the ears of most school-going children. Only good composers are represented in it, and many of them are great masters. Possibly some of the songs by living men have too many "sharps and flats" to be at home in a "nursery," but they nevertheless catch the eye and admiration of the mature reader. The best of the book is the large number of English, French, and German folk songs. These are always good, good for anyone at any time of his life, and of wonderfully fine influence for children. The bits from symphonies by Beethoven and Brahms rendered vocal by modern versifiers are less appropriate, and some of them, for instance the tune from Brahms's Second Symphony, are prematurely jolted by the editor into the final double bar.

The "Nursery Garland" contains about one hundred and seventy pages of handsomely printed songs and illustrations grouped under six headings from "First We Dance," through "Now We Talk Nonsense," and others, to "Now We Will Be a Little Bit Serious." Some of the songs are new, others are adapted from old masters. A few of the pieces are for piano alone.

In addition to the music there is printed much "glad" poetic and homiletic material. Whether the songs and sermons go willingly hand in hand is—well, I shall leave that to the children.

THE ODD SPOT. By HUGH CHESTERMAN. New York: D. Appleton & Co. 1928.

Mr. Chesterman has made a reputation for himself as a children's humorist. It is a pity, then, that he should allow such work as "The Odd Spot" to go out under his name. For it is quite forced and lacking in spontaneity. The fact that it is a book about funny animals by Hugh Chesterman will result in disappointment to a good many. Or worse still, since such books are continually being written and widely sold, it will *not* result in disappointment to a good many.



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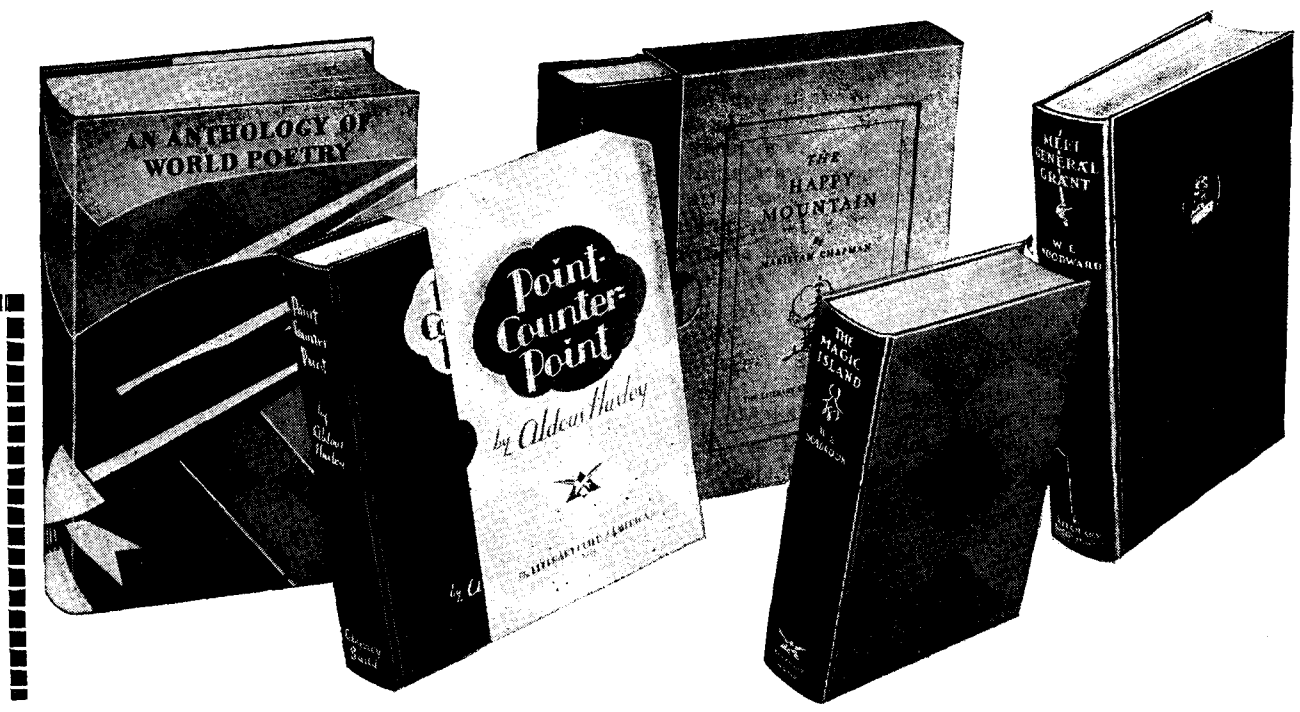

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